

The
Unveiling
of
JESUS
CHRIST



A. E. KNOCH

THE UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST *in Revelation, the last book of the Bible*

Our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, is coming. We are about to be caught up to be together with Him. On all sides signs abound which fill our hearts with high hope and ardent expectation. Widespread apostasy within the Church, the federation of the nations, the restoration of Israel to the land of promise—all unite in urging us to be brief in our business, for our time is short.

How does the future look to God and His Christ? To the believers, among whom we find ourselves? To mankind at large, ever suffering from bitter strife? To the world of spirits, which is seeking to intrude into human affairs at every turn? To the Jew, who for nearly two thousand years without a land or a government of his own, finds himself struggling for survival within the boundaries of his ancient patrimony?

Where will the next Temple be built?

On Mount Moriah which is now occupied by the Mosque of Omar, or rather on Mount Zion where the tabernacle used to be in David's day?

These questions, and many more, never satisfactorily explained heretofore, are easily answered as soon as the Divine literary outline of the book is recognized, i.e. The Unveiling of Jesus Christ, as Prophet, as King, and as Priest.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Although essentially a Bible translator, A. E. Knoch (1874 - 1965) also wrote many expositions of various portions of Scripture. He was, for more than fifty years, editor of *UNSEARCHABLE RICHES*, a magazine devoted to exegesis, which enjoys a worldwide circulation.

His best known work is the Concordant Version of the Sacred Scriptures. Unique in its concept, this illuminating, accurate, succinct translation is proving helpful to an ever-widening circle of readers. The *CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT* is available at your Christian Bookseller, as is *GENESIS*, *ISAIAH*, and *THE BOOK OF DANIEL*, the first fascicles of the *CONCORDANT LITERAL OLD TESTAMENT*, which is being issued in parts.

THE CONCORDANT GREEK TEXT is perhaps the most valuable contribution which A. E. Knoch has made to the student of Scripture. The only book of its kind, it uses Greek uncial characters from type made by Mr. Knoch himself, in order to simulate the handwriting of the scribes who penned the ancient manuscripts, thus avoiding the necessity of adding interpolations such as punctuation, paragraphing, etc. A word-for-word English sublinear is included, as well as a superlinear giving divergent Greek readings.

By the Same Author—

A Timely Analysis of Daniel's Prophecy

CONCORDANT STUDIES IN THE
BOOK OF DANIEL

New vistas into political and religious world history are opened up in these CONCORDANT STUDIES, as God's great disclosures in the prophecy of Daniel provide a key to human history in the past, a clue to its future, as well as inner peace for the present. It reveals the folly and futility of man, and the wisdom and ability of God. It leads to distrust of His creatures, yet enables us to rest in perfect repose on the God Who is operating the universe in accord with the counsel of His will.

Hence prophecy is of the utmost value to our spirits in our everyday life. It is composed not merely of predictions of great disasters in the dim future, but is a chart and compass for our use in the midst of the toil and turmoil of today.

Why should we fret and fume because our fellow men seem determined to drive this world headlong into dire disaster? All is the consequence of God's decree, and all is in line with Divine revelation, which not only predicts the evil, but foretells the glorious good for which it is the somber foil.

What about the Middle East?

The political situation there in the years to come is fully discussed in the second half of this book. See for yourself why we should watch for an upright ruler in a Greater Egypt to stand up, as this event will probably be the first sign of the approaching time of the end.

THE UNVEILING

THE DIVINE MYSTERIES

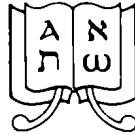
The Unveiling of Jesus Christ

COMMONLY CALLED
THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN

WITH A REVISED
CONCORDANT VERSION

INCLUDING
THE MYSTERY OF THE SEVEN STARS
THE MYSTERY OF GOD FINISHED
THE MYSTERY OF BABYLON

BY
A. E. KNOCH



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INTRODUCTION

OUR SAVIOUR, the Lord Jesus Christ, is coming. We are about to be gathered together unto Him. On all sides signs abound which fill our hearts with high hope and ardent expectation. The apostasy of the church, the federation of the nations, the restoration of Israel to the land of promise—all unite in urging us to be brief in our business, for our time is short.

As we are about to enter upon a somewhat protracted study of the great crisis to which the world is rushing, the thought intrudes, and it will not away: What time is there for lengthy expositions? Will He not come before we are well begun? And do not His saints need, sorely need, the knowledge that this book imparts, as soon as possible? So, in due regard to the blessed hope, we will prelude our exposition of this prophecy with a brief outline of things to come. No attempt will be made to prove any of the positions taken. This will be done in the later lessons. This plan will also serve to help the reader to see the succeeding unfolding from the writer's standpoint and not from his own or the thousands of varied viewpoints held by the readers of this book.

To simplify our vision of the future we will walk around our object, as it were, and view it from various angles. How does the future look to God and His Christ? To the saints, among whom we find ourselves? To mankind at large, still suffering from bitter strife? To the world of spirits, which is seeking to intrude into human affairs at every turn? To the Jew, who, for nearly two

thousand years without a land or a government, finds himself today struggling for possession of his ancient patrimony?

For all of these the on-rushing future is filled with big events. The crisis of all history lies just before us. The climax of the eons is at hand. All creation is about to stage and witness the greatest act in the tragedy of human existence. But let us always remember that it is only a crisis. The pangs, though sharp, are short. It is not the end. It is but the introduction to God's grand purpose to bless all His creatures. The far future is filled with overflowing bliss as long drawn out as the period of His indignation will be brief.

God should always be first in all our thoughts. The future, both near and far, affects Him much more than any of His creatures. We cannot really grasp the meaning of events unless we view them from the vantage of His great determination to become All in all His creatures, and so understand the plans He has proposed in order to carry out His primeval purpose.

Let us never lose sight, then, of God's grand goal, which He will gain through the mediatorial kingdom and priesthood of His Anointed, Christ Jesus, our Lord. Every vision, every trumpet, every woe, every bowl, heralds the fact that Christ is to be crowned the great Priest-King, that so He may bring back God's lost creation to the Father. Christ has died, and by His suffering He has acquired the right to reign. Men crucified Him and still refuse to own His sovereignty. Yet before very long the world kingdom will become our Lord's and His Christ's and He shall be reigning for the eons of the eons. Amen!

However much the world may war, God is still at peace with the race. Grace, unmixed and undiluted, reigns. Conciliation is still the substance of the gospel. Men may contend with one another but they cannot fight with heaven. It takes two to engage in strife, and God

refuses to be drawn into any conflict now. He fulfills His own injunction to His people: "Bless those who are persecuting you: bless and curse not" (Rom. 12:14).

But soon — how soon we cannot tell — high heaven's indignation will no longer be restrained. The day of vengeance and fury will take the place of peace. God will withdraw His ambassadors, and declare war upon this rebellious world. And what is the controversy about? What has mankind done to merit the awful terrors of the day of wrath?

We will never understand their crime until we judge it in God's presence. Men have not merely forgotten God but seem to have lost all consciousness of His existence. They shut Him out of all their thoughts. They will attempt to stamp His very Name out of the world He has created. They will mobilize all the armies of the earth against the feeble few who still acknowledge Him.

O what a mass of men there are today who are Christian in name but atheists in life and experience! To them God is but an avenue of gain, a badge of respectability. If it pays they will repudiate Him in a moment and join whatever seems to their advantage.

The consciousness of God is my most precious possession. It supports me in my trials and tempers my success. It changes life from a desperate gamble to an exultant assurance that I cannot miss His goal. I would not trade it for all the mines of golden California. All the pearls of the Pacific could not purchase it from me. He who would read this Apocalypse aright should cultivate the consciousness of God. It will put spirit and life into its dullest lines. It will put us in tune with the heart of the great Revealer, so that we can pierce the surface and enjoy the depths of wisdom and power, grace and love, which underlie the most dreadful calamities the world will ever be called upon to endure.

If God reverses His attitude toward mankind in that impending era of judgment, what part can we, His

saints, have in those times of terror? We are not only saved *by* grace but *for* grace, for such is the force of the original tongue in the apostle's letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 2:5). The Roman letter gives us further assurance. When we are still sinners, Christ died for us. Much rather then, being now justified in His blood, we shall be saved from indignation through Him (5:8, 9). We may suffer from the wrath of man, but when God deals out indignation, He cannot visit it upon those whom He Himself has justified. The Thessalonians likewise waited for God's Son from heaven, their Rescuer out of the coming indignation (1 Thes. 1:10). Speaking of those who will be snared in the strong delusion of the end time, Paul assures the Thessalonians that God prefers them for salvation . . . for the procuring of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thes. 2:13, 14). More pointedly still, referring to the sudden destruction of the day of the Lord, Paul insists that God has not appointed us to indignation, but to procure salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we *are watching* or *drowsing*, we should live at the same time together with Him (1 Thes. 5:9, 10).

We may exult, then, in the confidence that we shall never know the terrible trials of those who are called upon to live in those dreadful days. Instead, we will enjoy the ecstatic bliss which follows our assembling with Him (2 Thes. 2:1). Then we shall be ever with the Lord (1 Thes. 4:17) and, like Him, forever free from sin and suffering. As the body of Christ, we will be with Him and for Him, carrying out His will. Yet we have no hint that we shall be the agents in the judgment scenes portrayed in this Apocalypse. That is left to messengers whose spirit is not ours. We cannot find that God is going to display or dispense His wrath through us. Rather are we distinctly told that, in the eons to come God will show the transcendent riches of His *grace* by His kindness to us in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7).

So that, in entering this study of God's strange work, let us be clear that, in spirit, in sphere, and in object, it is not for us or of us. Our place is to dispense grace among the celestials, not wrath among the terrestrials.

But the world, alas! if they will not have Christ they must needs have antichrist. If they refuse the light of the world, they will follow the false beacon of Satan. The world wants peace and rest and satisfaction—*without Christ*. They will get war and turmoil and destruction with the false christ.

Let us briefly review the salient features of the world's progress toward its dimly defined Utopia. It is only in the last few years that mankind has been taking definite and decisive steps toward its realization. For some time we have heard of the "superman", some great personality who will so transcend ordinary mortals that he will be able to weld earth's discordant factions into one. Many of the great powers are actively engaged in forming the federation which will give him his place and power.

"The federation of the world!" "The parliament of man!" What delightful dreams for those who know not God or the prerogatives of His Christ! Yet He will allow mankind not only to unite but to give Satan and his christ the place which alone belongs to the Man of Golgotha. At present this nightmare is taking shape in the League of Nations, and the World Court.

We look for a federation of the western nations, eventually dominated by ten military powers, embracing Christendom. This will be formed with the avowed purpose of bringing peace to the distracted earth. Instead, however, it only leads to war and bloodshed unknown even in the terrible European conflict. It will be the West against the East, the Occident against the Orient. The West will win and weld the whole world into a universal empire, the first the nations have known since the days of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus and Alexander.

Whatever may be the forms of government which are fused into the great world power, the time comes when a man, the man of destiny, seizes the scepter imperial and demands not only the allegiance of mankind but its worship as well.

During the rise of this world empire the earth will be deluged with blood, the sword will be followed by famine, and famine by pestilence. These are but "providential judgments", for the hand of God is hidden. But after that the very earth shudders as it never did before at the horrors which it is called upon to witness. The very elements will rise against the God-dishonoring race to blot them out. Heaven above and earth beneath will open to discharge their agents of destruction upon the ungodly. At last men realize that there is a God behind all these strokes and they cry to the rocks to fall upon them and hide them from His face.

But still they persevere in their mad endeavors to force God from the earth. They mobilize an army from every land to exterminate His remaining witnesses and range their line along the valley of Jehoshaphat. And when all seems to have been accomplished and God has no place left on earth to plant His feet, His Christ descends on Olivet and with a breath destroys the armies of the nations. Thus ends mankind's wild rebellion against its rightful Suzerain.

Not mankind alone, but the spirit world as well, finds the crisis of its career in the era into which we are rushing. They seem to have some intimation of impending events, for they are far more active in the affairs of mankind than for many centuries. Not only is spiritism, which seeks to bridge the gulf between them and mankind, greatly on the increase, but the great leaders of human thought and government are holding themselves open to the suggestions which come from the spirit world, of which they do not know the source.

Second only to the distorted vision of God usually

entertained is the grotesque caricature of Satan which commonly passes as Bible truth. We shall have much to say of Satan's activities in the time of the end, when he changes his tactics to conform with his desperate position. But what is he like today? Has he horns and hoofs and a horrid shape? Far from it! He appears as a *messenger of light* (2 Cor. 11:14). His followers are not black imps or degenerate sots. They are ministers of righteousness. Satan has been most successful in deceiving mankind as to his methods. He can make but little progress with tools which are repulsive. He has made marvelous strides with attractive, upright apostles who preach righteousness and decency and reformation.

Where is Satan? Is he in the hell of Protestantism? He is not there and never was and never will be. His eonian doom is in the lake of fire, but, until the judgment era we are about to study, his chief residence is heaven. Indeed, the great event of this crisis is the ejection of Satan and his cohorts out of the celestial realms and their consequent riot of rage upon the earth. He heads the great rebellion of mankind against God by raising the murdered head of the great world empire from the dead and delegating all his authority to him. Thus the spirit world joins its forces with mankind to defeat and drive Him from the earth.

The enlightened saint who knows his place and privilege in the present economy is strong for peace with all mankind. His warfare is not with blood and flesh, but with the wicked spirits in the celestial spheres. Most of us have been trained to regard the earth as the scene of our warfare and heaven as the scene of our rest. The opposite is the truth. Our entrance by faith into our allotment in the heavenly realms is opposed at every turn by the powers of darkness. So successful have they been that few, indeed, of the saints ever come near enough to their possessions to know that Satan and his hosts have usurped them.

We war in heaven now, but when our Lord takes us there in fact, as we now are there in faith, then it is high time that the fight be fought to a finish. I cannot say that we engage in that battle. But we may be sure that Michael's messengers will force Satan from his place celestial down to the sphere of earth. Cramped in such narrow quarters, knowing that his time is short, Satan will work havoc for three years and a half through his representative, who is called the antichrist. Indeed it is very hard to separate the spiritual from this nether world, so close will be the affinity between them. And this will not be merely allowed by God but will be urged on by His decree. Through Satan He sends them a strong deception that they should believe the lie. Why does He do this? Is there not a great lesson for mankind in this terrible delusion? God wants mankind to acknowledge the supremacy of His spirit. He wants them to be filled with it and to obey it. He does not want mankind to follow its own will. So He stages this terrible ordeal to prove once for all that mankind cannot follow its own will. They have refused His beneficent entreaties. They think they are free to follow their own ways. But they find to their sorrow that the spirit world is their master; they are slaves. They cannot serve themselves. Those who do not bow to God must perforce worship His adversary, Satan.

To those living on the earth in those dreadful days nothing will seem clearer than that mankind has, at last, broken the shackles which have bound it. But to anointed eyes they appear twice enslaved, for Satan bends their will to accomplish his.

In those days there will be but one feeble flicker of faith left upon the earth. And where will that be? Among the faithful few of Abraham's seed who still cling to the God of their fathers. Today the Jew is an unbeliever. The moment he believes in Christ he is no longer a Jew. His destiny is changed from earth to

heaven. But in that day one hundred forty-four thousand of the sons of Israel will be faithful followers of the Nazarene; an innumerable multitude will seal their faith with their blood and in spite of the opposition of the whole world, they will refuse to bow to the image of the wild beast. How it softens our hearts toward the unrepentant nation to know that such a glorious record is theirs in the sorest affliction which even they shall ever endure!

But alas! not all are faithful. The greed for gold, which is their greatest fault, will prove too much for multitudes of the apostate nation.

Let us give a brief forecast of their history in the days to come. Not many years ago, one who dared suggest that they would return to the land of their fathers was a visionary and a dreamer. Now who denies the possibility, or the probability—nay, the necessity—of their return to Palestine? Will the nations go back on their pledged agreement? Palestine for the Jews! What a wonderful slogan that is to the humble believer who has long watched for the fulfillment of God's decree that they should once more inhabit the land He gave to the patriarchs!

Few events have such an important bearing on the study of this prophecy. In it we find the Jews located once more in the East. Not only are they found in the land, but in the adjacent countries of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia. Jerusalem and Babylon are the two great cities of the future. One is the haven of the faithful; the other is the seat of apostasy. The riches of the world will be gathered in these two cities. Babylon will be burdened with gold and every form of material wealth. The Jews of Babylon will lay the whole world under tribute. They will enjoy every blessing that earth affords.

But Jerusalem will have the monopoly of heavenly wealth—the true riches. Faith toward God is greater treasure than the earth will ever be able to afford. Baby-

lon will be able to gratify its cravings for a few brief years and suffer a terrible end. Jerusalem suffers for a brief era and enters into a thousand years of bliss, which proves but the portal to still rarer and more lasting joys on the new earth. Babylon sinks into the sea. Jerusalem rises to the mountain top, jeweled and radiant with the light of God.

The Jew, Jehovah's ancient people Israel, will come into his own when Christ, the Messiah, is in His proper place on the throne of David and, as the Son of Mankind, claims the sovereignty of the whole earth. The time of the end is, in a very real sense, the conflict between Israel and the nations. The nations will be defeated. Israel emerges from the struggle at the head of all earthly rule. For a thousand years they occupy the place of kings and priests, to rule mankind for Jehovah and to offer up their worship to God.

Their reign as priest-kings lasts for the millennium. Then priesthood vanishes with the day of Jehovah and all nations have access to Elohim on the new earth in the day of God. Yet even in that day the beloved nation in its magnificent capital, Jerusalem, holds sway over the other nations under the headship of the Messiah. Here we have the ideal of human government, for it solves its problems so successfully that at the conclusion of the day of God, all government vanishes. There is no evil to suppress—no need of any regulations when all are in perfect accord with God. Then the people of destiny, called the eonian nation, having fully performed their appointed functions, priesthood and rule, lose their eonian dignities in the august equality of the consummation.

Much of the success of Israel's reign, both in the day of the Lord and in the day of God which succeeds it, flows from the fact that Satan is restrained. At the beginning of the thousand years he is bound, that he should deceive the nations no longer till the thousand years are complete. Then once more he emerges and organizes his

last great attempt to usurp the throne of Christ. He succeeds in enlisting immense hordes in his crusade against the holy city, but they are crushed by a single blow and Satan never again leads anyone astray. He has made his last stand and is finally defeated.

Satan is not the only evil spirit that urges men against God and His Anointed. The mobilization of the world's armies at Armageddon — there is no *battle* of Armageddon — is accomplished by the energy of evil spirits who the seer tells us had the appearance of frogs. Let us be glad that none of us stand at Armageddon, for none of God's host will stand there and those who do will not "battle for the Lord", but against Him. When we hear that oft repeated name let us remember what it stands for and it will illuminate the political future like a searchlight.

At Armageddon armies from all over the world will be mobilized under one command. This shows us that, at last, the world is one. It reveals another fact, that the federation of the world is founded on force, not on mutual good will. And it uncovers the secret motive which has drawn mankind together—a common enemy. It is surprising what uncongenial souls will unite if they only have a mutual object of attack. Pilate and Herod became friends through their opposition to our Lord. And the federation of the world will be accomplished chiefly because all are agreed in uniting against God and the weak witness He still has upon the earth.

Let us allow the knowledge of these things to grip our hearts and control our course. Prophecy is the most practical politics. Should it be known that the party in power was doomed to destruction after a brief tenure in office, who would support it? Should it be known that its moral basis was unsound, who would vote for it? So it is with the momentous movements in the world today. What shall be our attitude toward the league of nations? Shall we oppose it? No. For we know from God's Word

that it shall come and we do not wish to stand against God's decree. Shall we acclaim it? No. For we know its motive, its history and its end. It is anti-Christian in the true meaning of that term. That is, it seeks to take the place of Christ and perform what He alone *can* do.

What, then, shall our attitude be? The answer is given us in one word. We are ambassadors from the court of heaven. An ambassador may not meddle with the politics of the country to which he is sent. Even though he knows that there is hostility to his government, he must conciliate. He cannot espouse any political plan or oppose any purpose of the court to which he is accredited.

But, you say, if hostilities break out between heaven and earth are we to stand idly by? No. When that time comes God will withdraw His ambassadors before He issues His declaration of war.

Let us remember, then, that in the bulk of this book God is waging a brief decisive war to recover a lost world. Before any part of this book can take place we must be withdrawn. True, we will leave our baggage behind, and will take nothing along but the wealth we have converted into heaven's currency, but not one member of the body of Christ will remain on earth to endure the rod of His wrath.

God's honor is at stake. His righteousness is in the balance. Not one who is justified shall know the heat of His indignation.

But let us never imagine that, even for mankind, with whom He strives, is His wrath a mere exhibition of His anger, without any object but the display of His indignation. The whole tenor of this book is against it. Its pages record a crisis, not an end; it is a preparation, not a doom. The judgment races through the short space of seven years; the blessings last for many thousands.

There have been crises before this. The flood was such an event. Indeed, it is often compared with these

days. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Mankind (Luke 17: 26). As the flood proved a blessing to the race, so will the apocalyptic judgments.

But the crisis here recorded is a much greater one than the flood. The flood was the transition from one eon to the next. The deluge led from one evil eon to another. But the crisis of this book carries us not only from an evil eon into a good one, but is the grand pivotal era in which mankind is definitely transferred from the evil eons into the good. There are three evil eons and two good. From the creation to the disruption of the first of Genesis was one; from thence to the flood another; and hence through the present evil age to the period of this prophecy is a third. These are all evil. After these there are two. The coming eon is beneficent and the succeeding eon is benign. So the period we are about to ponder is the pivotal point of the eons. Behind it are the evil eons; after it follow the eons of the eons, freighted with the fruits of God's affection for His creatures. These are foreshadowed in the closing scenes of this book.

If we peer past the scope of this prophecy into the great beyond which it fails to reach, we will find still further cause to admire God's wisdom in providing a plan to effect His purpose. Just beyond is the grand consummation, in which God becomes what He never could become apart from the presence of evil and the consequent estrangement between Him and His creatures. Apart from this there never could be any final reconciliation, no outflow and interchange of affection between God and His creatures. But after all the sorrow and suffering, the trial and tribulation which comes only when God is absent, His creatures will welcome His presence and live in His love which assures them of eternal bliss. Then, and not till then, will God attain His goal, and become All in all.

THE LITERARY FRAMEWORK OF THE UNVEILING

Fourfold Reversion

INTRODUCTION (1¹⁻³) The Swift Unveiling of Jesus Christ.

Blessing on the Reader, Hearer and Keeper.

MESSAGES TO THE ECCLESIAS (1⁴⁻³²²)

Reward according to *acts* (2²³, etc.)

THE THRONE (4¹⁻¹¹¹⁸) The *Political* Deliverance of the Earth.

Preparatory Vision: The Throne, the Scroll and the Lambkin (4¹⁻⁵¹⁴)

THE SEVEN SEALS restore Earth's Sovereignty to God.

The Four Horses (Providential):

Distant Conquest, War, Famine, Pestilence (6¹⁻⁸).

The Saints Slain. The Great Convulsion. (6⁹⁻¹⁷)

Preparatory Vision: The 144,000 and the Vast Crowd (7¹⁻¹⁷).

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS (an expansion of the Seventh Seal).

The First Four (Providential):

The Land, the Sea, the Waters, the Sun (8⁷⁻¹²).

The Three Woe Trumpets, the Abyss, the Euphrates

Preparatory Vision: The Messenger and the Open Scroll (10¹⁻³).

THE SEVEN THUNDERS (sealed up) (10⁴).

The Little Scroll Eaten (10⁵⁻¹¹).

The Temple Measured. The Two Witnesses (11¹⁻¹⁴).

The Seventh Trumpet (11¹⁵⁻¹⁸).

THE TEMPLE (11¹⁹⁻²⁰¹⁵) The *Religious* Deliverance of the Earth.

The Ark of the Covenant in View (Faithful Israel Redeemed 11¹⁹).

The Star-Crowned Woman and her Male Son (12^{1-2, 5-6, 14-16})

The Dragon and his Messengers (12^{3-4, 7-12, 17}).

The Wild Beast and his Prophet (13).

The 144,000 and the Blessed Dead (14¹⁻¹³).

The Harvest, blessing (14¹⁴⁻¹⁶)

The Vintage, judgment (14¹⁷⁻²⁰)

The Tabernacle of the Testimony in View (Apostate Israel Destroyed).

THE SEVEN BOWLS (15¹⁻¹⁶²¹)

The Unfaithful Woman (17¹⁻⁶).

The Scarlet Wild Beast (17⁷⁻¹¹).

The Ten Horns (17¹²⁻¹⁸).

Great Babylon (18-19⁸).

The Marriage of the Lambkin, blessing (19⁶⁻¹⁰).

God's Great Dinner, judgment (19¹¹⁻²¹).

Satan Bound: The Millennium (20¹⁻⁴).

The Former Resurrection: Judgment of Saints (20⁵⁻⁶).

Satan Loosed: The Brief Era of War (20⁷⁻¹⁰).

The Latter Resurrection: Judgment of Sinners (20¹¹⁻¹⁶).

THE TEMPLE (21¹⁻²⁷) The Lord God Almighty and the Lambkin (21²³)

The Holy Jerusalem Descends from Heaven.

THE THRONE (22¹⁻⁵)

The River of Life (not lightning and thunder) Issues out of the Throne
bringing Blessing (not wrath).

MESSAGES TO THE ECCLESIAS (22⁶⁻¹⁷)

Pay according to *work* (22¹²).

CONCLUSION (22¹⁸⁻²¹)

Curse on him who Adds or Subtracts from this Scroll.

The Swift Coming of the Lord Jesus.

THE DAY OF JEHOVAH

AS PROPHET

AS POTENTATE

AS PRIEST

Christ

DAY OF GOD

THE KEY — CHRIST

“THE UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST”—such is the inspired title of this scroll. And a divine title it surely is, for it suggests both the contents and the character of the prophecy which it commences. This is not a revelation merely of things to come, but the unveiling of a Person. And the title of this Person—Christ—is the key to the method by which it proceeds. Indeed, the whole scroll is but an expansion and an unfolding of its opening words.

If we compare this with the man-made title, “The Revelation of St. John the Divine,” how weak and foolish the human substitute seems! It undoubtedly was revealed through the beloved disciple, but John never sanctioned such an epithet as “Divine” after his name. It were better to call him “Boanerges”, a Son of Thunder, in this connection, if we must presume to add to this book in spite of the solemn curse on the one who does it. Let us brush all this aside. It is not merely a revelation *through* John, it is an unveiling *of* Jesus Christ.

The title, Christ, is the key to the understanding of this prophecy. With this as a clue, the book is transformed from a rambling record of unrelated events to a clear and comprehensive account of His unveiling. Its characters no longer move in a mist of uncertainty; its occurrences are no longer a series of confused happenings, but each scene keeps its appointed position, each character its proper place in the program, all accords with God’s purpose.

We are accustomed to restrict this title to our Lord.

Our versions never apply it to any other person. But it is well for us to apprehend that this is not a proper name, which belongs to Him alone, but a title which He shares with others, even though He, in this, as in all else, has the preëminence. Just as there are many masters, but He is *the* Master, or Lord, so, too, there were many christs, or anointed ones, though He is *the* Anointed One, called, in Hebrew, the Messiah; in Greek, the Christ; in English, the Anointed. Hence it is that we read of Him (Psa. 45:6, 7; Heb. 1:8, 9):

Thy throne, O God, is for the eon of the eon,
And a scepter of rectitude is the scepter of Thy kingdom.
Thou lovest righteousness and hatest injustice,
Therefore God, Thy God, anoints Thee with the oil of
exultation *beyond* Thy partners.

When Jehovah first planted His tabernacle in the midst of His people Israel He gave directions for the compounding of the holy anointing oil (Ex. 30:23). It was composed of olive oil with myrrh and cinnamon, aromatic cane and cassia, fit symbol of Jehovah's spirit, which supplied the qualifications needed to fill the office of priest or king or prophet. It was freely used in sanctifying the tabernacle and Aaron and his sons and all the priests who came after them. With it Samuel anointed Saul to be the leader in Israel and David to be their king. Indeed, David was thrice anointed, first in the hidden obscurity of his home in Bethlehem (1 Sam. 16:13), then by the men of Judah in Hebron (2 Sam. 2:4), and, seven years and six months later, over all Israel (2 Sam. 5:3). In this he is a perfect picture of his greater Son, Who was anointed by God long before His people acknowledge His claim to the throne.

The only prophet of whose anointing we have any record is Elisha, who received a double portion of Elijah's spirit when he was parted from him in a chariot of fire.

Before entering on His earthly ministry, the proc-

clamation of the kingdom of the heavens, our Lord was anointed as He came out from John's baptism, by the spirit of God descending, not in symbolic oil, but in the likeness of a dove (Mat. 3:16), and by the declaration of the Father: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I delight." Doubtless He refers to this when He commences His ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth. He opened the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, and read the passage (Isa. 61:1) where it is written:

The spirit of the Lord is on Me,
On account of which *He anoints Me*
To preach the evangel to the poor.
He has commissioned Me
To heal the crushed in heart,
To proclaim a pardon to the captives,
And the recovering of sight to the blind,
To dispatch the oppressed with a pardon,
To proclaim an acceptable year of the Lord,
(Luke 4:18, 19).

Here we have His anointing to the office of Prophet. Like the men of God of the ancient time, He goes about among the apostate nation to bring them to repentance. Here, too, He is anointed King, yet like David, He would not press His claim to the throne until the people wanted Him. Instead, they stirred up Herod and Pilate against Him (Acts 4:27). Yet, as with David in the cave of Adullam, a few, such as Peter, are led to acknowledge, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." After His resurrection many more acknowledged His anointing, fulfilling the type of David's exaltation to the throne of Judah. But, like David, seven years must still elapse before He is crowned King of all Israel. These seven years are fully detailed in this unveiling.

Of old, three classes were anointed with the holy anointing oil—prophets, and kings, and priests. Christ was anointed with holy spirit and power (Acts 10:38) and fulfills all these functions. He is the Prophet like Moses. He is the promised Son of David. He is a Priest according to the order of Melchisedec.

In this prophecy Christ is unveiled in these three characters in succession. First, He is presented as Prophet to the ecclesias in the synagogues. Then He is seen in the center of the throne, preparing to assert His regal claims. Then the temple is in view and His priestly prerogatives are pressed. Then comes the climax of the prophecy, when the new creation is ushered upon the scene. Thereafter He appears in the same characters again, but in reverse order. Priesthood is first. No temple, indeed, is seen, but He Himself is the Temple of the new Jerusalem. Then the throne appears and His reign extends to the limit of the eonian times. Finally He is a Prophet once again, in the midst of the ecclesias, as we saw Him at the beginning of the scroll.

This beautiful method of unfolding truth is often employed in the Scriptures. The epistle to the Ephesians is a perfect example of this plan, which is called, in Greek, an *epanodos*, or, in English, a reversion.

Let us note how beautifully this method is carried out in the introduction and conclusion of this book (1:1; 22:20). We begin with the swift unveiling of Jesus Christ and end with His swift coming. Is this not most impressive? How better could the divine Author force upon us the most important point of all? That is, the great truth that God has not deserted this earth to itself, as most people think, but when the right time comes the Lord will come *swiftly* and Christ will be unveiled *speedily*.

Notice, now, the point of second importance, the blessing and the curse, one at the opening and the other at the close (1:3; 22:18, 19). In the light of this how dare any one tamper with this prophecy? How can anyone insist that there is no blessing in it? It is our happy portion to repudiate everything that man has sought to add to it (especially the false title), and to claim the happy lot of those who read or hear this scroll and endeavor to conform our ways to the truth which it unfolds.

In this unveiling two separate sections of the prophecy are devoted to each of the glories of Christ. He appears first in the character of a Prophet to His own people in the synagogues. Here we see no throne, nor does He perform any act of worship. He is God's spokesman to the apostate people of His choice. Neither rule nor ritual, but righteousness is His theme. He exposes and rebukes and exhorts and promises. These are not the functions of a priest; nor are they the commands of a king. It is of prime importance that we know the character in which He presents Himself in this and succeeding sections. How much stress He lays upon the manner of His manifestation may be seen when, in each of the letters to the seven ecclesias, He repeats some appropriate part of His appearance to meet their special need. The fact that He moves among the lampstands somewhat after the manner of the priests in the tabernacle is no reason for making Him a priest in this section, for Moses, the prophet, had access to the holy place, as well as his brother Aaron, and his sons.

The body of the book, as is shown in the literary framework, is filled by the Throne and Temple sections. The former is political in its scope. The latter is religious. Such a division as this may often be noted in the Hebrew Scriptures. Kings and Chronicles, so-called, treat of the same occurrences, one from the human, the other from the divine side. The Minor Prophets are, half of them, political in aim, and half are religious in their object. So that such a division is nothing new, but well known and the natural sequence of God's previous method of revelation.

In the first section, as the Prophet like Moses, He speaks to His own people, Israel. Later, however, He associates them with Himself in the kingdom and temple service. Not only is He a royal Priest, but they are a regal priesthood.

Let us go back to the birth of the nation and see what

part Jehovah wished them to play in earth's affairs. They were rid of the bondage of Egypt. They camped beside Mount Sinai. Moses went up to God and Jehovah called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob, and tell the sons of Israel: '*You* saw what I did to the Egyptians. And *you* I bore on vulture's wings, and brought you to Me. And now, should you hearken when hearing My voice, and keep My covenant, you shall also come to be especially Mine of all peoples; for Mine is all the earth; and *you* shall become My priest kingdom and holy nation'." (Ex. 19: 3-6).

This is God's program for the people He had redeemed and brought to Himself. Not for their own sakes merely had He broken their bonds and brought them back to Him. He wished to have *all* His creatures blessed and they were to be the chosen channel. He needed a mediatorial nation to bridge the gulf between Himself and mankind. The two aspects of this mediation are presented in the two characters which they were to fill. As kings they were to rule the other nations *for* God: as priests they were to bring them *to* God. As kings they execute God's will, as priests they lead in His worship. God's primal purpose for them has never been fulfilled. They did *not* obey, hence they never yet have been a kingdom of priests or a holy nation. As the scroll before us unfolds, we will find that He has ways and means to prepare them for these great functions. After the judgments have purged them, then they will be ready to fulfill the purpose for which they were originally called. As priests, they live and reign with Christ the thousand years.

The political section opens with the most magnificent scene which has ever been displayed to mortal gaze. The throne of the divine majesty is seen, upon the cherubim. Surrounding it are twenty-four thrones filled by the highest dignitaries of the celestial realms. About all these are thousands upon thousands of messengers. And, in its

ever widening reach, the vision includes the entire creation. The grandeur of the scene fades before the momentous question which is presented. The action is sublime in its simplicity. A sealed scroll, symbol of a lost allotment, lies upon the hand of the Enthroned. The redemption of earth's sovereignty from the hands of God's enemies is involved in the opening of the scroll with its seven seals. The lists are open to all. The cry goes forth: "Who is able to open the scroll?" And no one was found in all the universe who was able to break the seals!

Today the world is full of plans to redeem mankind. Peace conferences are hailed as the great opportunity of the ages to save the world from autocracy. Democracy is to be the great deliverer. Give the nations the right to rule themselves and no other redemption will be needed! Form a League of Nations and war will cease from the earth! Since these have failed, dictators have tried, with more success. They show that what is needed is an all-wise, all-powerful, righteous Dictator, not a democracy. But alas for all these schemes! They all ignore the fact that *no one is able*. No man, no ruler, no messenger, not even the enthroned elders, are able to so much as look at the scroll. How then is the great task to be accomplished? Amidst all the vast concourse there is One Who is the subject of this unveiling. In the center of the messengers and of the seniors and of the very throne itself appears a little Lamb as though slain. His weakness and death have made Him able! As the lion of Judah's tribe, He will open the seals and deliver by power what He has already redeemed by blood.

The storm of earth's political deliverance proceeds as each successive seal is snapped. Providential judgments, war, famine, pestilence, follow each other in quick succession. The seventh seal is expanded into seven trumpets when the providential judgments give place to direct inflictions. The seventh trumpet carries the section to its climax. The kingdoms of this world become

the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ, and it will last for the eons of the eons. Amen!

Referring to the framework, it will be seen that there is a threefold action in this section. There are three preparatory visions. The first prepares for the seals. The second for the trumpets. The third is followed by the seven thunders. Before the war-trumpets sound the alarm, Jehovah takes steps to shield His own from the fury of His indignation. The one hundred forty-four thousand and the vast crowd, both from the nation of His choice, both candidates for the coming kingdom, are preserved from the terrible visitations of the trumpets.

The temple section covers the same period of time and engages us with the same characters as the political section, but they are viewed from an entirely different angle. The one hundred forty-four thousand are seen once more. The great conqueror reappears under the figure of a horn of the wild beast.

But the temple section, even more than the preceding one, engages us with the nation of Israel, both faithful and apostate. The action is twofold. First, when the temple is opened, the ark of the covenant is in view, which demands the deliverance of Israel. Later, after this has been accomplished, the law is exposed, which demands the destruction of the apostates. This is accomplished by the pouring out of the seven bowls.

It will be of great help to us, when we come to study the closing chapters of this scroll, to consider them under the same subjects as the preceding part. The temple and the throne come before us again. It is especially profitable to note that the standpoint of the apostle in his closing message to the ecclesias is not that of the distant future on the new earth, but the same as obtains in the earlier section of the scroll.

When once the mind seizes the three great themes of the book, connected with the synagogues, with the throne, and with the temple, it is easy to get a grasp of

the whole prophecy and its various parts. Once this is learned the way is open to enter and enjoy the further unfolding with profit and pleasure.

And let us lay this on our hearts: The subject is *Christ*, and His threefold glories as the Messiah, God's Anointed—Prophet, King, and Priest. All of its action is directed toward one goal—to reveal Him in His glories, and, as a necessary sequel, bless the human race and glorify His God and Father. Unless we see the vital relation of all to Him and His Unveiling, the book will remain sealed to our hearts and hidden from our heads. But with this key we will be enabled to unlock its secrets. The mysteries will no longer be mysterious. The terrors will no longer terrify. It will no longer be a dim and dismal portent of the future, but a clear and comforting revelation of the official glories of God's Anointed Prophet, Potentate, and Priest.

A CHART OF THE EONIAN TIMES

2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 1:2; (Rom. 16:25)
 BEFORE THE EONS. 1 Cor. 2:7; [Jd. 25]. GOD ALL
 THE BEGINNING

2Ti.4:18; Hb.13:21; 1Pt.4:11; 5:11; Un.1:6,18; 4:9,10; 5:13; 7:12; 10:6; 11:15; 14:11; 15:7; 19:3; 20:10; 22:5
 THE EONS of THE EONS Ro.16:27; Ga.1:5; Ph.4:20; 1Ti.1:17

EON of THE EONS Eph.3:21

EON of THE EON Heb.1:8

CONCLUSION OF THE EONS Heb.9:26

THE ON-COMING EONS Eph.2:7

FOR THE EONS Luke 1:33; Rom.1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 2 Cor.11:31; Heb.13:8

THE EONS Eph.3:11; 1Tim.1:17; Heb.1:2; 11:3; Jude 25

THE CROSS

cf. 2 Pet. 3:6. "The world that then was" and Eph. 2:2. Then

THE DISRUPTION

cf. 2 Pet. 2:5. "The ancient world" and Eph. 2:2. Leads to

THE DELUGE

THE PRESENT EON.
 Gal. 1:4.

THE CURRENT EON.
 1 Ti. 6:17; 2 Ti. 4:10; Tit. 2:12.

THIS EON.
 Mt.12:32; 13:22; Mk. 4:19; Lu. 16:8; 20:34; Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 1:20; 2:6, 6, 8; 3:18; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 1:21; 2:2 (with world).

FOR THE EON.
 Mt. 21:19; Mk. 11:14; Jn. 12:34; 13:8; 1 Co. 8:13.

FROM THE EON.
 Lu. 1:70; Acts 3:21; 15:18.

OUT OF THE EON.
 Jn. 9:32.

CONCLUSION OF THE EON.
 Mt.13:39, 40, 49; 24:3.

THE DAY OF WRATH

THE COMING EON.
 Mk. 10:30; Lu. 18:30.

THE FUTURE EON.
 Hb. 6:5.

THAT EON.
 Lu. 20:35.

FOR THE EON.
 Mk. 3:29; Lu. 1:55; Jn. 4:14; 6:51, 58; 8:35, 35, 51, 52; 10:28; 11:26; 12:34; 14:16; 2 Cor. 9:9; Hb. 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21, 24, 28; 1 Pt. 1:25; 2 Pt. 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:17; 2 Jn. 2; Jd. 13.

FOR THE DAY OF THE EON.
 2 Pt. 3:18 (cf. Deut. 32:7; Mic. 5:2; 7:14; Mal. 3:4).

CONCLUSION OF THE EON.
 Mt. 28:20.

THE JUDGMENT

EONIAN TIMES.
 Ro. 16:25; 2 Ti. 1:9; Tit. 1:2.

LIFE.
 Mt. 19:16; Mk. 10:17; Lu. 18:18; Mt. 19:29; Mk. 10:30; Lu. 18:30; Mt. 25:46; Lu. 10:25; Jn. 3:15, 16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 17:2, 3. Acts 13:46, 48. Ro. 2:7; 5:21; 6:22, 23. Ga. 6:8. 1 Ti. 1:16; 6:12. Tit. 1:2; 3:7. 1 Jn. 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20. Jude 21.

SALVATION.
 Hb. 5:9.

REDEMPTION.
 Hb. 9:12.

COVENANT.
 Hb. 13:20.

ALLOTMENT. GOD
 Hb. 9:15. ALL

KINGDOM. IN
 2 Pt. 1:11. CHRIST

EVANGEL.
 Un. 14:6.

CONSOLATION.
 2 Th. 2:16.

GLORY.
 2 Co. 4:17; 2 Ti. 2:10; 1 Pt. 5:10.

GOD.
 Ro. 16:26.

FIRE, PUNISHMENT,
 ETC.
 Mt. 18:8; 25:41, 46; Mk. 3:29; 2 Th. 1:9; Hb. 6:2; Jd. 7.

OTHER OCCURRENCES
 Lu. 16:9; 2 Co. 4:18; 5:1; 1 Ti. 6:16; Phn. 15; Hb. 9:14.

THE CONSUMMATION 1 Co. 15:24.
 THE CONSUMMATIONS OF THE EONS. 1 Co. 10:11. GOD ALL IN ALL

THE EONS OF THE EONS

THE course of time, in the Scriptures, is divided into three grand divisions: the eons, or ages, the time *before* they began, and the time *after* they have run their course. Almost all of God's revelation is confined to the eons, yet it is of the utmost value to know that they are not eternal in the past nor everlasting in the future. They have definite boundaries. We know nothing of the commencement of time before the eons, nor of the end of the time after them, but the eons themselves are marked by a definite beginning and a predetermined end. Eternity, if we wish to use a term not sanctioned by Scripture, might be loosely applied to either the pre-eonian or the post-eonian times, but can never be correctly coupled with any eon, or age, or with the whole course of the eons. Just as we are, at present, near the end, or conclusion, of an eon, so the time will come when mankind will reach the consummation of all the eons. Each one is a definite length of time and the duration of all the eons is but the sum of the duration of them all. Very little, indeed, is said of the time before the eons. Paul, to whom alone the full scope of God's revelation was disclosed, tells us of the times outside the eons, just as he also enlarges the sphere of God's grace to include the entire universe. In both space and time he transcends the earth-bound eonian limits of previous unfoldings and enlarges our vision to include heaven as well as earth, and all time, of which the eons are but a parenthetical part. He tells us of God's promises given us *before* eonian times (2 Tim. 1:9; Titus

1:2). The translators of our Authorized Version, realizing the fact that their theology would not allow them to render it “eternal” or “everlasting”, as they have done everywhere else except in Romans 16:25, changed boldly to “before the *world began*”, leaving out the word *times* and substituting *world* for “eternal”. The Revisers, to their great credit, were consistent to the point of absurdity. They render it “before times eternal”, an impossible phrase, which, while it mars their work and makes no sense, at least suggests to the discerning student that “eternal” is not as ancient as has been supposed.

In passing, it is worth while to note the great value of consistency in the translation of this passage. Judged by every other standard, the old reading is much better. Yet the absurdly consistent rendering is the one which transmits the true thought, distorted though it be. One step further in the same direction and the Revisers would have revealed to our view the great doctrine of the eons. They should have connected their “eternal” with “age”, which is their oft-repeated margin for “ever”.

The conclusion of the eons is likewise involved in obscurity in our versions. They suggest that this august event has already occurred at the manifestation of Christ (Heb. 9:26). However the words may be translated, the argument of the passage is clear. The high priest went in every year with the blood of others. Not so Christ. He sacrificed Himself once. There was no sacrifice on His part from the disruption, when sin entered, until His manifestation. Neither will there be any further offering needed all the way to the conclusion of the eons, when sin is repudiated. The single suffering of Christ suffices for both the past and the future, from sin’s entrance to its exit, from the disruption to the conclusion of the eons, when sin is put away. There is a sense in which sin is “put away” potentially or in the experience of the believer, but in the sense here indicated, as the antithesis of the disruption, it can refer

only to the actual removal of sin itself—which will occur at the very time indicated, the conclusion of the eons.

Having discovered that the eons are a definite segment of time, with a commencement and a conclusion, the way is open to consider the eonian times themselves.

Five eons, or ages, are referred to in the Scriptures. These, with the time before and the time after the eons, make seven subdivisions of all time. To the student of number in Scripture and in nature these figures are satisfactory and significant. The material sphere shows similar features. There are three great divisions, subterranean, terrestrial, and celestial. Both sound and light divide, first into three and then into seven subdivisions. The number seven denotes completion or perfection and should never be associated with the eons, for they are the scene of sin and imperfection. It is only their passing that procures perfection. They are well characterized by the number five, the number of weakness and work.

The five eons are separated from one another by the four great physical and moral cataclysms which punctuate the history of the human race. These are: the disruption of Genesis 1:2, the deluge, the judgment period of the Unveiling, and the fiery ordeal which ushers in the new heavens and the new earth. What other events can compare with these for scope and intensity? These affect the physical and moral constitution of the earth and its inhabitants to such an extent as to introduce a new and unprecedented state of affairs. This is what constitutes a new eon, or age.

As this Unveiling gives us a short account of the two great crises which are still future, it will help us to compare them with the corresponding catastrophes in the past. The fiery cataclysm which transforms this earth into a new one has its counterpart in the first disaster of which we have any record. After the earth had been created perfect it *became* (not *was*) “waste and void”. Without inquiring into the meaning of these terms, it is

enough to know that Isaiah uses the same expression, and insists that it was *not* so created (Isa. 45:18). It *became* so. The first earth was swept away by water. So the present earth will be refined by fire. The first was a physical renewal. The last will be a chemical re-creation.

The judgments which occupy the bulk of this Unveiling have their counterpart in the deluge. As it was in the days of Noah so will it be in the days of the Son of Mankind.

These four great crises in God's dealings with the earth are the boundary stones between the five eons, or ages. There was one eon before the cataclysm of the second verse of Genesis. Another filled in the time until the deluge. The present evil eon commenced then and will last until Christ comes to claim His regal rights. Then comes the kingdom, which yields to the last grand eon when a new heaven and a new earth usher in the day of God.

These five eons are divided into two groups. The first group comprises the first three eons. The second group includes the last two, which are often called the eons *of* the eons. The last one is once called the eon of the eon (Heb. 1:8). We learn from this that the first three eons are preparatory to the last two, which spring out of them. The first three eons are in man's day and are most unsatisfactory when viewed by themselves. But when we consider them as the ground in which the seed which springs up and blooms in the last two eons finds its roots, they take on a new and more satisfactory character. The present evil eon crucified the Lord of glory and thus proclaimed its utter depravity, yet, at the same time, its very sin slew the sacrifice on which repose all the blessings and glories of the last two eons.

These two groups of eons are opposites. The first group is full of human failure and culminates in the utter alienation of the race from God. The second group is actively under the sovereignty of Christ and He proves

such a magnificent success that, at their close, the whole universe is reconciled to God.

The Unveiling occupies the closing years of the evil eons but covers the whole range of the eons of the cons. In fact it carries us across the crisis from the eons of shame into the eons of glory.

We cannot help expressing our deep regret that our translators should ever have rendered *eon* by *ever*. In one place they were forced to render it more correctly. Speaking of a secret which God hid (Col. 1:26) they should, to be consistent, have had it “hid *for ever* . . . but now is made manifest to His saints”. Only the evident absurdity of their usual rendering kept them from repeating it in this passage. But is it not just as ridiculous to ascribe glory and dominion to God *now*, on the earth, when He has no hand in its government and His name is blasphemed on every side? The Scriptures ascribe honor and glory to Him *for the eons of the eons*—not in this present evil eon.

It is, if anything, even more to be deplored that the Revisers, who had such an excellent opportunity to correct this theological fraud, and who advertise their intention to avoid this fault in their preface, did not render this word by some consistent system, or at least allow a uniform marginal note. As it is they give the word “age” in the margin in about half of its occurrences, but leave the other half unnoted. The intelligent reader must infer from this that the word “age” does *not* occur in the latter cases, and is thus led astray.

It is no proof of devotion and loyalty to God to intrude with the endlessness of God’s glory where that is not the point, and more especially when such a course eventually leads to other distortions of the Scriptures which emphatically deny His grandest glory. To say that God will be glorified on the earth does not deny His heavenly glories. To ascribe honor to Him for the eons of the eons does not imply that He will be dishonored

after they have passed by. On the contrary, to falsify this fine phrase by "for ever and ever" makes impossible the ultimate reconciliation of all, the consummation after the eons have run their course. It thus denies that He will become All in all. *This* is the honor and glory which *does* last for ever. All others are transient and lead to it or are merged with it.

If we look back, God is the Creator of all. This is truth absolute and we cannot allow any modification to mar it. In the future He is the Reconciler of all. This, too, is truth absolute and we dare not deny His desire or ability to accomplish it. For this, creation was only the prelude. For this the cross was endured. This is what Christ's resurrection secured. This is the solution of the presence of sin, the answer to all the problems of the eons.

Let it then be distinctly noted that those who hold to the Scriptural doctrine of the eons do not limit the life or glory of God, but rather refuse the limitations which rob Him of His greatest and grandest glory.

The last two eons are the only ones mentioned in this Unveiling, and they are always joined together in all of the fourteen occurrences. In fact the phrase "for the eons of the eons" occurs in every instance except one, and there it is almost the same, "for eons of the eons" (Un. 14:11), the article being omitted once.

How much more satisfactory and full of meaning is the opening doxology in the light of the doctrine of the eons! "To Him Who is loving us and looses us from our sins by His blood and makes us a kingdom and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and might for the eons of the eons! *Amen!*" Once we see that it is the purpose of this book to unveil His glories for these two eons, the aptness of the praise appeals to us. The kingdom and priesthood spoken of are confined to these eons. In fact it is only in these that His glory and might are displayed. Before these eons He was veiled in weakness and

shame, not manifested in majesty and power. *After these eons He will lay aside all the glories connected with the kingdom and priesthood.* God Himself, we read, will tent with mankind on the new earth. And at the consummation, all sovereignty and authority and power will vanish and the Son will cease to reign, for He hands over the kingdom to the Father. Is it not much grander to see His subjection to the Father after all else has become subordinate than to think of the endless exercise of might to cope with evil and hold it in check? Is it not infinitely more to God the Father's glory that His might should not find endless exercise but should finally effect the purposes of love? Much that finds a fitting place in these doxologies may well be His for ever, but there is always some glory which has no place beyond the eons.

This is even more evident in the two passages where this phrase is associated with the *reign* of Christ and His saints (11:15; 22:5). The abolition of all sovereignty and authority and power precludes the possibility of an endless reign either by Christ or by His saints. They certainly do not reign *now*. They certainly will not reign when every form of government has passed away. They reign in between these two conditions—in the eons of the eons.

Most, if not all of us, approach the Scriptures with the superstition that the consummation will find the earth one vast charnel house, and death will reign supreme over all except a favored few. To suggest that the phrase, "Who lives for the eons of the eons," does not describe the endlessness of His life, insinuates that we consign Him to the realm of death after the eons have passed by. Not so! He is the Conqueror of death. His conquest will not be complete until the consummation, when the death state will be abolished absolutely. If we would only grasp the Scriptural teaching representing the final outcome of all, that the time will come when death will be vanquished completely, and all who

were held in its power will be alive, then it will become trite and trivial to say that He lives *forever*. Eventually *all* will live forever. But not all, by any means, will live for the eons of the eons (1 Cor. 15:20-28).

What is “eternal” life? Is the word *life* a chameleon which suddenly changes its significance when the word “eternal” touches it? There is no valid reason whatever why we should understand life in this phrase in any but its usual force. The difficulty, of course, lies in the fact that, although the believer *has* “eternal” life, millions of saints have died and millions more will give up their life in the grim persecutions of the Lord’s day. If we live while we are dead, why then we can just as logically say that we are dead while we live! Prejudice repudiates such a statement, but prejudice should not decide. We know that we are alive and not dead. And we ought to know that any saint who dies never had entered into “eternal” life. If he had he could not die. Cannot we see the unreasonableness of such trifling with the sacred Scriptures? If life is death and death life, then we no longer have any revelation from God.

Paul, speaking to Titus, reminds him of the *expectation* of eonian life, which God, who does not lie, promises before eonian times (Titus 1:2). Again, near the end of his epistle, he makes us enjoyers, *in expectation*, of the allotment of eonian life.

John, the beloved apostle, who so often speaks of eonian life, for his ministry is especially adapted to the coming eon, has the same expectation: “And this is the promise which He promises us: the life eonian” (1 Jn. 2:25).

But what of the Scriptures which affirm that some *have* eonian life? In John 3:15, 16 it is the subjunctive *may have*, so that no present possession is in point. In John 6:54 the Lord defines His position. Of certain ones He says, “he has eonian life, and *I* shall be raising him at the last day”. *Having* eonian life is not incompatible with death until the last day. It is evidently life

beginning with the resurrection. It is not life in this eon, but in the coming eon (Luke 18:30). The gift of God is eonian life (Rom. 6:23). Not merely a continuous existence, but life for the eons of the eons when it will be worth while to live. In brief, eonian life is life for the eons of the eons. It is not a miserable existence in this evil eon, subject to infirmity and decay without actual dissolution. Such a fate would be unutterably fearful to contemplate. But, more than this, it is not death with its decay and corruption. It is *life*. Life beyond death. Resurrection life, when all who are Christ's will have been made alive to join in His glorious unveiling. It is life for the eons of the eons.

The doctrine of the eons is of the utmost value in placing this prophecy in its true perspective. It does not give us "the end of the world". It does not carry us beyond the eons. It ends, or rather consummates, nothing. It describes to us the turning point in God's dealings with mankind. It portrays the greatest crisis in the history of the human race. It carries us out of the evil eons into the good.

This prophecy does not lead us into "the final state". To the very end it occupies us with transient administrations which precede the consummation. As it is the unveiling of Jesus Christ in His official glories, it is manifestly not concerned with that august ultimate when He lays these glories aside and abdicates the throne in favor of His God and Father.

Hence this scroll must be viewed, not as a visitation of final vengeance on the race, but as the beginning of His active and open intervention, through Christ to bring mankind back to Himself and to usher in the long promised blessings which lead to His final goal.

THE EONS OF THE EONS

As the usual translation "for ever and ever" utterly darkens the truth as to the time periods occupied by this

unveiling, it will be well to compare this rendering with others of like structure in order to convince ourselves of its stupidity. The Hebrew idiom, by which the greatest is expressed by relating it to others of its class, has been adopted in English and is well understood. The following list of the principal phrases of this kind shows how inconsistently this phrase has been translated. Indeed, it is hardly correct to say that it has been *translated*. It has been perverted and corrupted in order to uphold a popular but God-dishonoring error.

ORIGINAL	ENGLISHED	STULTIFIED
[The Bible is the]	book of books	book and book
[The Lord's Coming is the]	day of days	day and day
<i>shir eshirim</i>	song of songs	song and song
<i>qdsh equdshim</i>	holy of holies	holy and holy
<i>ta hagia tōn hagiōn</i>	holy of holies	holy and holy
<i>kurios kuriōn</i>	Lord of lords	Lord and lord
<i>basileus basileōn</i>	King of kings	King and king
<i>aiōn tōn aiōnōn</i>	eon of the eons	ever and ever (R.V.)
<i>throughout all ages, world without end (A.V.)</i>		

The stultifying effect of theological tradition is seen in the change made by the Revisers, who altered "world without end" to "ever and ever". Because they had been inconsistent elsewhere they determined to be consistent in their inconsistency here. According to the Authorized Version we should have even more startling results. Then the Bible would be a *book without end*!

The translation "for ever and ever" if intelligently and heartily applied to the interpretation of this book should drive the reader insane. But if we consider the two eons as the final and finishing eons of the series, as the holy places in the tabernacle were of the rest of the sanctuary, then all is illumined with a holy yet loving light, and our heads and our hearts are not seared, but satisfied.

THE THREE DAYS

THREE DAYS characterize the history of mankind from the beginning to the consummation. They are Man's Day, the Day of Jehovah, and the Day of God. The first grand section of this Unveiling deals with the destruction of all that was in Man's Day by the ushering in of the Day of Jehovah. The second division deals with the Day of God.

Man's day is the only day *we* have ever known, but it is fast nearing its close. All of the first division of this Unveiling, up to the new earth, is in the Lord's Day. Thenceforward to the end we are occupied with the Day of God.

Man's day is ending when the action of this book commences, but it will be well for us to use the light which the phrase gives us to illuminate some of the dark corners of the time in which we live that we may understand better why Jehovah deals so harshly with its achievements.

The phrase is used by the apostle Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4:3): "Now to me," he says, "it is the least trifle that I may be being examined by you or by man's day . . ." "Man's *judgment*," the old version rendered it, and thus covered up a great mine of truth. "Man's *day*" opens up a vista of principles and practises, of motives and methods so out of line with the apostle's purpose in life that he made no effort whatever to conform to its decrees.

The underlying principle of each of these days is the same. It is *exaltation*. Just as the prophet concludes his

description of the Lord's Day with the reassuring declaration that "Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day", so also in the other two days. Up to the present time mankind is striving to exalt itself. *Jehovah* alone will be exalted in the coming day. *God* will have the highest place on the new earth.

In Man's Day mankind is given a free rein to show what the race is capable of accomplishing. Man is being tried under all conceivable circumstances. Before the flood the test was conducted under anarchy; since then man has tried every variety of government from democracy to despotism, from Socialism to plutocracy. Laws are made by the million and broken by the billion every year. Government is being continually reformed but nothing is ever final.

The truth that we are living in Man's Day is the answer to some of the most perplexing questions which have ever been propounded. Again and again the complaint arises, If God has all wisdom, why does He allow such a state of affairs to exist? The answer is, that He is displaying His wisdom through human folly. If He has all power, why does He not use force to end the violence of man? But how can we know His power except by the impotence of human might? If He is Love why does He not care for His creatures and comfort them in their distress? But God's love never glows so brightly as when stirred by human hate.

But these answers would not satisfy us if Man's Day were interminable. The day of man must last long enough to give ample opportunity to the human race to prove its impotence, but not one instant longer. We must not judge God by the history of the human race during this period in which He has purposely withdrawn. The next two days will provide ample proof that His ways with mankind are in perfect accord with His glorious attributes.

The first intimation of the period in which the action

of this prophecy is placed is found when John tells us plainly that, in spirit, he came to be in the Lord's day. The old version would have us believe that he was "in the Spirit *on* the Lord's day", that is, in a trance *on* the day we call Sunday. A reference to the Greek text will quickly show that it should read *in* and not *on*. These two connectives are quite distinct in Greek and are never confounded with one another. The offensiveness of the substitute lies in the English idiom by which "*on* the Lord's day" suggests a day of the week, misnamed by many "the sabbath", or "the first day of the week", or "the Lord's day". All of these are most mischievous and unscriptural substitutes for Sunday. Saturday, the seventh day, is the sabbath for Israel. "The first day of the week" is a fable forced upon us by a company of translators who deliberately manufactured the phrase to sanction the keeping of Sunday, while "the Lord's day" has absolutely no support in holy writ as applied to a day of the week.

It is not revealed what day it was when the seer perceived his visions. And, indeed, what would be gained if we knew the day or the hour? What we wish to know is the time to which the vision applies. A hasty glance will soon show us that Man's Day is closing. His highest efforts fail. His haughty head is humbled. There is no question at all but that the terrible time foretold by the prophets and called by them "the day of Jehovah" was vividly brought before John's vision and that he was, in spirit, in the day of the Lord.

If, then, he *was* in the Lord's day, what would be more to the point than to open the vision by telling us the time of its application?

Some have suggested that there is a difference between "the Lord's day" as it is given here, and "the day of the Lord" as it is in the Hebrew Scriptures. We hardly need to mention that in Hebrew there is no means of saying "the Lord's day". The Hebrew translation of

this book, we understand, translates this phrase just as it is in the prophets, "the day of the Lord".

But there is a good reason for the change here. In *meaning* there is not the slightest difference between "the Lord's day" and "the day of the Lord", but in *emphasis* there is. The prophets laid their stress upon the *character* of the day: it was the day of *Jehovah*. The seer of Patmos dwells on the *time* of the vision: it was in the Lord's *day*. Hence the noun "Lord" is lowered in rank to a descriptive term and placed before the noun it modifies in order to allow the emphasis to fall on the *day* in which the vision was perceived.

The prophet Isaiah gives us two notable descriptions of the coming of the day of Jehovah. First he enlarges upon it in connection with the blessing of Jerusalem. Later he treats of it as it affects the destruction of Babylon. These are the two cities which come before us in the temple section of this Unveiling. No one who will compare Isaiah's description with the later revelation will be able to doubt for an instant that John *was* transported into the day of Jehovah foretold by the ancient Hebrew prophets.

Let the reader turn to the second chapter of Isaiah and read the whole of it. The keynote is struck in the eleventh verse (C. V., tentative rendering) :

¹¹ The haughty eyes of humans are lowered,
And prostrate is the height of mortals,
And inaccessible is Jehovah alone in that day.

This is repeated in the seventeenth verse. This is the very antithesis of Man's Day, when Christ not only humbled Himself, but was unutterably humiliated by the heads of haughty human institutions. The high priest, the religious head, exalted himself and humbled Christ. Herod, the political authority, shielded himself while he allowed them to crucify Christ.

But in Jehovah's Day all this will be reversed. The Crucified One will be crowned with many diadems. The

earth will be filled with blessing, but it will be the portion of the meek and humble in heart.

The closing section of the chapter (verses 19-22) gives us a remarkable description of the means which will be used to bring this about. It corresponds closely with the sixth chapter of this Unveiling, where men call upon the mountains and hills to fall upon them and hide them from the face of the One Who is sitting on the throne. Isaiah says (2:19) :

¹⁹ And they enter into the caves of the rocks,
And into tunnels of the soil,
From the face of awful Jehovah,
And from the honor of His pride,
When He rises to terrify the earth.

Yet not all of Jehovah's Day is filled with destruction. Peace, the great desire of all nations, will then be realized. Until then men will fight for it, but never taste its sweets for long (Isa. 2:4) :

⁴ And He judges between the nations,
And corrects many peoples.
And they pound their swords into mattocks,
And their spears into hooks for pruning.
And they shall not, nation against nation, lift up the sword,
And none shall longer learn war.

This is the result of the righteous rule of Jehovah, for the law for the whole earth will go forth from Jerusalem.

A different aspect of that dreadful day is presented to us in the thirteenth chapter of the same prophet. Not Jerusalem but Babylon is the theme here. First we have the gathering of the nations against Babylon. Then we are taken back to the heavenly portents under the sixth seal. The stars, the sun, and the moon refuse to shine. Both heaven and earth are shaken. The effect on Babylon will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. As a result (Isa. 13:20) :

²⁰ She shall not dwell permanently,
Nor shall she tabernacle further, generation after generation,
Nor shall tent there the Arab,
And shepherds shall not recline there.

How this reminds one of the destruction of Babylon in the Unveiling! "Thus Babylon, the great city, will be hurled down, and she may be found in her nevermore!" (Un. 18:21).

The Minor Prophets Joel and Zechariah have notable accounts of the Lord's day and, in each case, they describe the very scenes which are found in this Unveiling. Joel begins with the description of a famine (1:15-18; Un. 6:8). Then the ravages of fire follow (1:19, 20; Un. 8:7). Even the cavalry of the abyss is described (2:4-9; Un. 9:17). The great earthquake and the eclipse of the heavenly bodies are vividly predicted (2:10; Un. 6:12; 8:12).

Zechariah gives us the closing scenes of judgment which cluster around Jerusalem and the manifestation of the Lord in power and glory. The mobilization of all nations at Armageddon, the capture of Jerusalem, and the great earthquake when the Lord descends upon the Mount of Olives, is detailed with great fullness, as it affects the city and the land.

And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth.

All of these prophecies are distinctly and definitely located in the day of Jehovah. All of them describe the very same events which are seen in vision by John when he was transported, in spirit, into the Lord's day.

In view of this, how can we even consider any other interpretation of these words? If it was on the sabbath, why was it not so stated? If on Sunday, this, too, could have been indicated. But the spirit of God avoided all such terms and chose one well known and loved by all who read the prophets.

The distinction between Man's Day and the Lord's Day is easily grasped. But what difference is there between the Lord's Day and the Day of God? The latter phrase is not found in this Unveiling, but the new heavens and the new earth are associated with this phrase by

the apostle Peter, who also describes the close of the Day of the Lord because of the presence of the Day of God (2 Pet. 3:12): "hoping for and hurrying the presence of the day of God, because of which the heavens, being on fire, will be dissolved, and the elements are decomposed by combustion! Yet we, according to His promises, are hoping for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness is dwelling."

From this passage it is evident that the Day of the Lord comes to its end with the burning of this earth and the Day of God commences with the new creation. By comparing conditions before and after this event we doubtless would be able to get glimpses of the knowledge we are seeking. But a much more direct method is to examine the titles themselves as they are used in the Hebrew Scriptures.

The title "Lord" refers us to the Hebrew "Jehovah". "God" is the usual translation of "Elohim". Among the many divine titles in the Hebrew Scriptures these two are the most notable. They are used thousands of times and always with precision and due regard to their significance. They cannot be interchanged without spoiling the passage in which they occur. We read that Jehovah is the Elohim of Israel (Isa. 45:3). This is full of satisfactory sense. But if we transpose the titles and say that Elohim is the Jehovah of Israel, the statement, though true, lacks all point.

These two titles are like two great pillars which uphold the temple of His glory. They are founded in the very constitution of the universe. Every act or event in the history of the creation may be described from two standpoints—place and time. God's great purpose to reveal Himself makes use of these two elements. The sphere of His self-revelation is comprised within the heavens and the earth. The time is confined to the ages or eons. In conformity with this He assumes a place-name and a time-title. Elohim is God in His connection

with space; Jehovah connects Him with the course of time.

In the beginning, we read, Elohim created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1): Mark the title. Not Jehovah, but Elohim. He created the stage on which the tragedy of humanity was to be enacted. And so throughout the chapter. It is Elohim Who makes and creates the creatures and their environment. Man is created in His image—a term referring to form. As soon, however, as the stage is set, the history of man's creation is rehearsed from the new standpoint of *time*. *Jehovah* Elohim formed the man out of the soil of the ground, and man became a living soul. Here it is that human history begins. At this point the clock begins to tick off the seconds and the story of man, which needs not only place but time for its unfoldment, commences. This is the reason that the title "Jehovah" is associated with Elohim. The introduction of a new element calls out a new side of the divine character, which is expressed by the title He assumes.

That Jehovah is the title which links our Lord with the sphere of time is evident from its composition. It is usually derived from the Hebrew substantive "to be" or "to become" in three of its forms which may be rendered as the future HE WILL BE, the present BEING, and the past HE WAS. This is the order in the Hebrew. But when we come to its thrice repeated equivalent in this Unveiling, the future no longer occupies the place of prominence at the beginning, but is found at the end. Why is this? Is there some mistake? Not at all. There is no change in the components of the title, but only a shifting of its emphasis from the future to the present. And what could be more apt under the circumstances? In the prophets, the name Jehovah was the name of hope, of future fulfillment. They looked forward. But now that the day of Jehovah has come, the emphasis falls on the fact that He IS, and all that occurs is founded on the

fact of His present operations. Indeed, so flexible is this title, that its later occurrences omit the future altogether. That part of the incommunicable name which has been fulfilled falls off (Un. 11: 17; 16: 5). Hope gives place to realization. Have we not here a plain indication of the transient nature of this one of the divine assumptions? Elohim is permanent as place; Jehovah is transient as time. Jehovah is the eonian God, the God of the ages. Beyond these the title has no application.

But the most important point lies in the association of this title with the nation of Israel. Jehovah is not the God of all the nations. He is confined to one nation—the sons of Jacob. Ever since they have been separated from the rest and made the appointed channel of blessing for the earth, Jehovah has been their God, and the day of Jehovah is *their* day as well as His. That day holds little hope for any other nation, as such. But for Israel it has a thousand promises. It is the day of days for them, when, as the priest kingdom, they hold the highest place for a millennium. Let us never connect the title Jehovah with any other nation.

The tremendous import of this fact in interpreting this Unveiling is hard to realize at first. But gradually, as other facts confirm it, the light breaks into our dull hearts. This day is not for the nations. They had their opportunity in Man's Day. The day of Jehovah is for Israel and Israel's God.

That Elohim associates God with the universe of space is remarkably confirmed by its Greek equivalent *Theos*. The ending *-os* is merely an addition to indicate the nominative case. We have *Theou*, *Theō*, *Theon*, and *Thee*, for the genitive, dative, accusative, and vocative cases. The real root is THE-. This Greek element carries the constant idea, TO PLACE, and is so defined in the Concordant Version. The Greek equivalent of Elohim the Disposer, is "PLACER", which relates Him to the vast realm of space and all its contents.

As Jehovah is the God of the covenant people, so Elohim is the God of creation. He is bound by ties unbreakable to every being in the universe. He breaks down the barriers between Himself and mankind at the beginning of His day. "God Himself," we read, "shall be their God". He will tent with them. He will comfort them. He will not dwell in a temple, inaccessible except to a favored few. While the ascendancy of Israel in the sphere of politics still remains on the new earth, their priesthood vanishes. In the beginning, before the days of Abraham and Isaac and Israel, God dealt with all mankind directly. So will it be in the final eon. A glorious day will dawn, more splendid far than the much mentioned millennium, in which the breach between mankind and God will be well nigh bridged. As much as the millennium surpasses the present, so shall this marvelous day outstrip the glories of the day of Jehovah.

The Unveiling of Jesus Christ, then, marks the climax in the relations between God and His creatures. Man's miserable attempt to get along without Him finally fails. He takes the helm and guides the universe straight toward its final goal.

Man's day is nearly done. The day of Jehovah impends! What a marvelous comfort this should be to us! No more of man's misrule with all its untold harvest of sorrow and suffering! Soon, very soon, the pride of man shall be brought low, and Jehovah alone shall be exalted! God speed the day!

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROPHECY

IN order that we may have the whole sweep of prophecy in mind before we approach this Unveiling, I take peculiar pleasure in presenting at this point a pamphlet by my dearest friend and departed fellow slave, Vladimir Gelesnoff. He, in turn, seems to have been helped by the writings of Benjamin West. The pamphlet follows:

It is a very common opinion, widely spread throughout Christendom, and enjoying especial favor among the cultured, that the matter and thought of the prophets, though brought home to the imagination and heart by means of excellent literary forms, reflect the crude ideas current in a remote age, ideas which our century of boasted enlightenment has long outdistanced and outgrown. This prejudice against writings so sublime and far-reaching, and occupying so much space in the revelation of God, is as remarkable in our age, as it is inexcusable, although by no means surprising. It is part of the paganism which came in with the Renaissance, and which our higher education, both secular and theological, is still too timid to shake off.

In seeking to approach the much neglected writings of the prophets, viz., Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the twelve so-called Minor Prophets, our first endeavor will be to take a general survey of the broad table land of prophecy.

Two different modes of study invite the student: one examines each prophet in detail with a view to understand them as a whole, the other studies the entire series as a whole with a view to understand each separate unit.

The first is the method almost universally adopted by students of prophecy: they pick up an outstanding passage here and there, submit it to minute investigation, and concentrate upon it the combined light of other passages. The second method is the one we propose to follow. We will take the reader to a vantage point sufficiently distant to permit the survey of the whole field at once; we will sweep over the entire ground again and again, and yet again; we will soar higher and higher until an altitude is reached which permits an unclouded view of the towering peaks which give direction to the entire range of Old Testament prophecy.

The division of the Davidic kingdom under Rehoboam into the ten-tribed Israel, call "Ephraim", and the two-tribed Israel, call "Judah", as distinguished from "all Israel", or the twelve-tribed nation, laid the ground for all the prophecies concerning the kingdom. The prophets group themselves around the several great epochs of the nation's history. Historically considered, in relation to Judah, they fall into three main divisions:

- (1) Pre-exile prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah.
- (2) Exile prophets: Ezekiel and Daniel.
- (3) Post-exile prophets: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

In relation to both Ephraim and Judah, they fall into five chief divisions:

- (1) Pre-Assyrian prophets: Obadiah, Joel, Jonah.
- (2) Assyrian prophets: Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk.
- (3) The transition prophet: Zephaniah.
- (4) The Chaldean period: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel.
- (5) The Persian period: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The foregoing divisions serve only the purpose of linking the prophets with phases of national experiences. A real grouping must rest on such common characteristics as internal evidence discloses.

As an aid in this direction, it is necessary that we

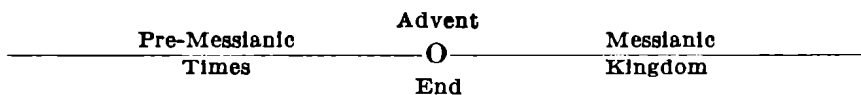
should know that, from first to last, the kingdom of God on earth, its development through Israel in relation to the nations, amid conflicts and victories, judgment and mercy, apostasy and recovery, and its consummation in glory, is the one theme of Old Testament prophecy. The kingdom of God, though one, experiences many changes of form in the process of realization, and runs through various periods and ends. Essentially, it is one. Phenomenally, it is many. It is an endless kingdom in its essence. It is a temporal kingdom in its forms. It exists eternally. The eons pass away. The kingdom abides. New forms emerge during the passage of time until the final form appears when the Son delivers up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be All in all. (1 Cor. 15:28). The original prophetic germ is the promise to our progenitors in Gen. 3:15. As the mighty oak is latent in the acorn, so the doctrine of the prophets is involved in the first promise which assumes in the process of time more ample and concrete forms. The great prophetic epochs which mark Israel's path to the appointed end are evolved by division and integration. The result is that, as prophecy advances, what is folded up darkly, at first, is opened out in clearer and distincter statement later on. The periods and the ends become more definite. The later predictions build on the earlier. The spirit of prophecy is one. The function of the later prophets is not to discard, but to develop, the earlier.

By observation of this, we learn that the Babylonian captivity was an epoch-making event in molding the subsequent development of prophecy. The calamity which brought destruction to Jerusalem and captivity to Judah altered the general distribution of the course of time, and this difference constitutes the distinctive feature between pre-exile and post-exile prophecy.

In the pre-exile prophets the whole course of time, from Israel's first emergence into the family of nations

until the new heaven and new earth are ushered in, is divided into *two great periods*, the bisecting epoch between them being the personal self-revelation of Jehovah in glory, for the deliverance of Israel and the destruction of His and their enemies, and for the establishment of His kingdom as an outward polity on earth. All is composite photography here, the events standing cheek to cheek, which only later prophecy can separate. The pre-exile prophets do not discriminate between the *parousia* in humiliation and the *parousia* in glory, but behold the whole work of Messiah.

Messiah's suffering and glories are combined; the year of Jehovah's favor and the day of vengeance, Israel's dispersion and restoration, are spoken of in the same breath, without any intimation of their being rent off from one another by an intervening gap. This is the uniform view of all pre-exile prophecy. If we represent, in schematic form, the viewpoint of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, the diagram will stand thus:



When we come to post-exile prophecy we find a marked difference from pre-exile prophecy in respect of the distribution of time. Events which, in the earlier prophets, stood together in one picture, begins to be parted here. Two advents instead of one appear. Two judgments instead of one. Two captivities instead of one. This much is clear, that the nation of Israel has not acquired wisdom by the catastrophe of the exile, for prophecy now speaks of a second destruction of rebuilt Jerusalem. As the result of Israel's impenitence, even after the return from Babylon, there is a second dispersion, another period of desolation, a curse for repudiating Messiah Himself. And yet they paint in colors most

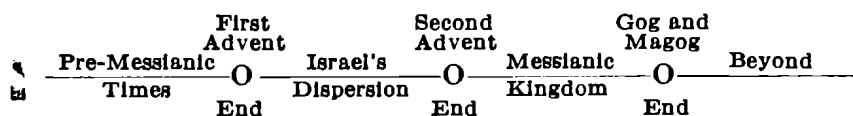
Something new has occurred. The synthesis of times and ends in pre-exile prophecy has given place to their analysis in post-exile prophecy. The one end parts into two, each part closing itself up again, the space between becoming an intermediate period. Instead of two periods and one end, as in pre-exile prophecy, we have three periods and two ends, schematized thus:



After the return from exile, at the expiration of a chronologically measured period, Messiah appears, but not in glory. He is "cut off", and there is nothing for Him—no kingdom as predicted by pre-exile prophets, no crown, no throne. He is rooted out by a violent death, and Israel is, in consequence, dispersed and their city razed to the ground. Messiah vanishes from mortal view and remains concealed and unseen throughout the whole period of Israel's rejection. At the end of the decreed measure of desolations Messiah comes out of His concealment and appears in the clouds of heaven. He comes to Israel, broken in pieces and crushed by the gentile beast, to restore to them the covenanted kingdom. At His first coming He is rejected by Israel, and Israel is rejected by Him. At His second coming He is accepted by Israel, and Israel is accepted by Him. At His first appearing there is "nothing for Him". Now there is everything for Him. Then, also, there was nothing for Israel as a nation. Now there is all. The kingdom and the glory are for both "under the whole heaven". Such is the picture Daniel gives us: two advents, two ends, three periods, instead of the one advent, one end, two periods, of pre-exile prophecy.

Nor is this all. Ezekiel exhibits a further development in the distribution of time. Whereas Daniel had detailed the times that must supervene over Israel *prior* to Messiah's advent to set up the kingdom, Ezekiel develops the times *following* the setting up of Messiah's kingdom on earth. He sees not only Israel's supremacy over the gentiles which the other prophets have celebrated, but also their restoration as a people, their political reunion and independence, their national conversion, their reinstatement in the land promised to the fathers, the re-apportionment of the land among the tribes, God's sanctuary in their midst, and David, their Shepherd-Prince ruling over them. Instead of the Valley of Dry Bones he sees a resurrected people standing up as a mighty army, and instinct with the "spirit of life from God".

The peculiar feature in Ezekiel is that he sees an end to the Messianic age. Israel's kingdom is destined to sustain another shock at the hands of the nations after the "many days" of prosperity and peace in the kingdom. The possibility of Messiah's kingdom undergoing a change of form, hinted in the other prophets in the phrase "for the eon and *further*", now receives its true significance. What before was a mere hint now becomes a concrete reality. Instead of three periods and two ends, we now have four periods and three ends. If we schematize the conception, the diagram will stand thus:



New Testament prophecy is outside the scope of this study. Yet it seems most fitting, by way of a moment's digression, to speak of the latest development of the doctrine of the kingdom in the writings of the apostles. In fewest words we deal with it.

The twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse tells of the

millennial revolt. It speaks of the collapse of that regime of apparent peace and good will. Pass on now to the last two chapters. There, in the language of imagery that holds us spellbound, we have the glorious post-millennial eon described. Here we have a full tableau of the "further" of the prophets. What the ancient seers could scarcely discern by reason of distance has drawn sufficiently near to admit of observation.

It was reserved for the apostle to the gentiles to put the finishing touch to the unfoldings of the kingdom. Paul sees farther than any other inspired writer. He sees an end even to that age of ages. The Son Who had assumed dominion at last resigns His throne unquestioned and unmarred to God. Instead of the four periods and three ends, we now have five periods and four ends. If we once more schematize the conception we get the following diagram:



If we sum up, therefore, our survey of the prophets, the whole subject will shine out with a clearness equal to the brilliance of the noonday. What we have in the writings of the prophets, is the development of God's kingdom on earth, by means of Israel, the Messianic nation. The prophetic writings begin somewhere after the division of the Davidic kingdom. From that time onward, the prophets look to the time of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel at Messiah's coming in glory, and even to an age farther dimly discerned as a far-off "further". In all we see how Israel, "God's choice for the eons", stands out, in apostasy and in their calling and mission, as the bringer, nationally, of salvation to the nations. "Salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22). Israel is evermore the root, the center, the organic basis and ground of all.

V. G.

THE EONS THE DAYS THE SEVENTY HEPTADS

THE TIME PERIODS OF THE UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE PROPHET DANIEL

IN THE SEVERAL
CHARACTERS OF

A.D. 33 (?)

PROPHET

KING
SEALS
TRUMPETS
THUNDERS

PRIEST

BOWLS

THE EONS OF THE EONS	THE LORD'S DAY	MAN'S DAY	The Present	The Commencement of the Lord's Day may be expanded as follows: Seven Years	The Era of Indignation	BOW		THE SEVENTIETH HEPTAD OR "WEEK"	
						II. RED SWORD			
THE DAY OF GOD						III. BLACK BALANCES			
						IV. SALLOW DEATH			
						Middle of the Heptad			
						The Covenant	is Broken	Daily Offering	Ceases
						V.			
						VI.			
						The Two Witnesses Testify 1260 Days			
						VII.			
							1 Hail, Fire, Blood		
							2 Mountain of Fire		
							3 Star, Absinth		
							4 A Third Eclipsed		
							5 Abyss, Locusts		
							6 Cavalry Army		
							7 The Kingdom	Ulcers 1	
								Sea, Souls Die 2	
								Rivers Blood 3	
								Sun Scorches 4	
								Darkness 5	
								Armageddon 6	
								Earthquake 7	
						3 Days			
								1290	30 Days
								Offering	— Resumed
								1335	45 Days
								The Former	— Resurrection
								2300	965 Days
								Temple	— Dedicated
								1000 Years	
									The Millennium

THE SEVENTIETH HEPTAD

THE prophecies of Daniel are a necessary prelude to the apprehension of the Unveiling of Jesus Christ, which presents the crisis of all of Daniel's predictions. The kingdoms of the great metallic image have all passed into history except the last one. Babylon's golden despotism came to its end during Daniel's lifetime. The Medo-Persian monarchy continued until Alexander swept it off the scene in his swift career. His empire, like its two predecessors, was world wide, so that, we are told, he wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. Since then there has been no world-embracing empire. Many may have wept because they could not conquer the world, but no one, like Alexander, has been able to vanquish all opposition. No nation has been able to subdue all the earth. Rome never conquered Ireland, or the upper reaches of Scotland, or the greater part of Germany, or Scythia. Her legions were stopped at the Rhine, the Danube, and the Euphrates. Her imperial eagles never had a permanent place over the city which was the seat of all previous empires. To conquer France you must take Paris, to vanquish Germany you must seize Berlin, to subdue England London must be captured. If the world is to be won the conqueror must seize its capital, Babylon. This world-capital must be in possession of him who desires to hold sway over all mankind. Rome never held Babylon. Turned back by the ferocious tribes of the north, held at bay by the fierce Arabs of the desert, Rome, in fact, never was the mistress of the world.

But are we not told that Cæsar Augustus ordered a census to be taken of the whole inhabited earth (Luke 2:1)? He did. We implicitly believe the *record*. But we have no faith in *Cæsar*! His grandiloquent decree sounds very fine, but he knew and everyone else knew that it was not strictly in accord with facts. The fourth kingdom of Daniel's image is not Rome. It is a still future empire which will actually include *all* nations and peoples and languages in its embrace, just as Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Macedonia have done in the past. It will not be limited to the comparatively narrow confines of the ancient Roman empire. It will include empires much larger in area than Rome ever was.

The ten toes of the image appear in this Unveiling, corresponding to the ten horns of the wild beast. But it is an earlier aspect than the horns. The toes, composed of iron and clay, present the same truth, from a different angle, which we see in the scarlet woman seated on the scarlet ten-horned monster. Israel, the clay people, will enter into a league of alien nations and have a voice in the government of mankind. The kingdom of the end time is a hybrid dominion, composed of an amalgam of apostate Jews and ungodly gentiles.

The wild beasts of Daniel's later vision will come before us again, so we will not enlarge upon them now. Suffice it to say here, too, that Daniel presents an earlier glimpse than is accorded in the Unveiling. They are seen as four separate wild beasts when they first appear, though later the three eastern beasts are devoured by the western nondescript. In the visions of John all the characteristics of the four beasts appear in one monster. We do not see the beasts until they have been assimilated into one great confederation, or, as Daniel puts it, have been devoured by the fourth beast.

The fact that the wild beast of the Apocalypse is a composite made up of the four beasts of Daniel ought to be sufficient to guard us from the common error of iden-

tifying them with the empires of the image. If we couple this with the fact that the vision was not given to Daniel until Babylon's days were nearly numbered, the conclusion is final. And, besides, the beasts are contemporaneous. The fourth beast devours the other three, not as we would expect if the beasts succeeded each other and each devoured its predecessor. In the Unveiling the seer of Patmos gives us the elaborated crisis of the seventh of Daniel.

So it is with the vision of the seventy heptads, or "weeks". Sixty-nine heptads have been fulfilled. The seventieth heptad still remains. It is elaborated in this Unveiling. Before considering this notable era, we stop to deplore the rendering "weeks". The translators had an excellent opportunity to use this word in the tenth chapter where the Hebrew reads "three sevens of *days*". This should read simply "three weeks", for it is further defined in the thirteenth verse as "twenty-one days". But the aged prophet was not thinking of *days* when this vision was given, but of the seventy *years* of the captivity which had almost run their course. He hoped that the period of gentile rule was about to end and that Israel was to be restored, and the blessings of Messiah's presence would bring in eonian righteousness. The answer is that a period seven times as long as the captivity has been cut out of the period of gentile supremacy, at the end of which all that he prayed for would be fulfilled.

There is no excuse for thinking that these sevens or heptads run on unbrokenly to their end. There is the plainest intimation to the contrary, for Messiah must be "cut off" *after* sixty-nine heptads. Then the city and sanctuary are destroyed. Then a league, or covenant, is entered into by the majority of Daniel's people which is to run seven years. This is the seventieth "week", or heptad. This is the period brought before us in the judgment era of this Unveiling.

What is the characteristic feature of the "seventieth

week''? It is the existence of a covenant, the operation of a treaty between "many" in Israel and the great Desolator of the time of the end. This should throw a lurid light upon the pages of the Unveiling. It should confirm us in the position that the ten toes are a confederacy between Israel and the nations.

That the entire period is a literal era totaling four hundred and ninety years of three hundred and sixty days to the year has been full established by the fact that the number of days from the decree of Artaxerxes to restore and build Jerusalem until our Lord's "triumphal" entry into the capital, near the end of His ministry (Luke 19:35-40), was exactly 173,880 days, which equals seven times sixty-nine years of 360 days each. From this we come to the conclusion that the period of the apocalyptic judgments will cover seven years of three hundred and sixty days, or two thousand five hundred and twenty days.

Referring again to Daniel's prediction we find that the covenant will be broken in the middle of the heptad. The daily offering will no longer be allowed. The Desolator changes from a friend to a foe. We may well suppose that this change of front on his part is connected with the ministry of the two witnesses. They testify twelve hundred sixty days (exactly half of the entire period), then lie dead for three days and a half, and ascend before Christ descends. Hence it is evident that they commence their ministry *before* the covenant is broken. The ministry of the two witnesses, then, covers just half of the seventieth heptad.

Daniel, by halving the last heptad, gives us a period of three and a half years' duration. The same interval of time measures the career of the wild beast, the provisioning of the sun-clothed woman and the treading of Jerusalem. It is measured by the moon (a symbol of the powers of darkness) when connected with the beast and the nations—forty-two months. It is measured by the

sun and the seasons when associated with the sun-clothed woman who has the moon under her feet.

The two witnesses are killed under the sixth trumpet, which is the second woe. This is some time before the coming of Christ. Hence the two witnesses begin their testimony before the middle of the heptad, before the covenant is broken and the daily offering ceases. This is probably before the fifth seal, when the persecution against the saints commences.

Jerusalem is the city which is trodden forty-two months and there it is that the two witnesses seal their testimony with their blood. It may help us to understand the condition of affairs in the holy city if we turn over to the religious division of this Unveiling and find that the very same time period is brought before us in connection with the sun-clothed woman, who can be no other than the holy city. Dating doubtless from the middle of the heptad, when Satan is cast down to the earth, the faithful saints in Jerusalem fly for their lives into the wilderness where they will be nurtured for twelve hundred and sixty days (Un. 12:6). The same period is again mentioned, but is called "a season and seasons and half a season", doubtless in view of the fact that sustenance depends upon the seasons. The time from one harvest to another is a "season". Hid away in some inaccessible corner in the wilderness, with no commerce with the outside world, her chief need is food. This is supplied miraculously as when she came out of Egypt.

It is evident that, if we wish to get a proper perspective of this Unveiling, we must focus our eyes on the middle of the heptad. This is the pivot of prophecy. This is the greatest crisis in the history of the chosen nation and of the whole race. At this point Satan takes active control of human affairs and demands the worship of humanity. Up to this point the Jews have the right to worship their God in the temple at Jerusalem. This is guaranteed to them by an international treaty. But after

forty-two months the treaty proves "a scrap of paper". The God of Israel is defied! His worship must be stamped out! All who serve Him must be exterminated!

God takes up the challenge. Judgment is no longer "providential", such as war and famine and pestilence. He marshals the whole creation against the rebels. The very elements turn against them.

Meanwhile the most fearful pogrom ever organized breaks out against the few faithful Jews who remain loyal to Jehovah. Many seal their faith with their blood. Those in the holy city—the true trysting place of those who were waiting for their Messiah to appear on Olivet—those in Jerusalem are miraculously saved and preserved through the terrible affliction until the trial is past.

The chronology of the Unveiling can best be constructed in the light of this crisis in the middle of the heptad. Let us ask, for instance, where does the fifth seal belong? Before the breaking of the covenant the Jews were protected in their religion. It is only after this that they suffer. Hence the fifth seal is at the beginning of the second half of the heptad.

For the first three and a half years everything looks favorable to Israel. There are great wars. The occident subdues the orient. But they are on the winning side. Doubtless they suffer as all mankind will suffer, from the fighting and the famine and the pestilence that follows. These are but the beginning of travails (Mat. 24:8). Then, after these visitations, "they shall be giving you up to affliction, and they shall be killing you: and you shall be hated by all of the nations because of My name".

Alas, they have been hated by many nations for their own sake. They have been driven back to their own land in large measure by the hatred of the nations. Now they think themselves secure at last. They are under the protection of the great federation which guarantees to all the smaller nationalities the right to control their domestic affairs to suit themselves.

The Chart of Time Periods given herewith is intended to be merely suggestive and help to a true perspective. Like all charts it has its shortcomings, but these are not to be compared with its advantages. One of the gravest difficulties in reading the Unveiling is the tendency on our part to take its unfoldings in chronological order and to imagine there are vast periods of time between events separated by many pages and the record of many occurrences. Again we suppose that the breaking of a seal or the sounding of a trumpet is a momentary event, when it may cover a considerable period. The seventh trumpet, for instance, must be a prolonged blast, for we read of "the *days* of the seventh messenger's voice" (Un. 10:7). This seems, however, to be especially true of the earlier judgments which are prolonged and of limited intensity, while the later ones are swift and severe.

It will help us greatly if we fix the terminal points of the three great series of judgments. If we know when they end it will aid us in placing them where they belong. The sixth seal takes us up to the advent. Its portents are foretold by our Lord (Mat. 24:29). He adds "And *then* the sign of the Son of Mankind shall be appearing in heaven; and *then* all the tribes of the land shall be grieving, and they shall be viewing the Son of Mankind coming on the clouds of heaven with power and much glory" (Mat. 24:30). It is evident that the seventh seal brings us to, if, indeed, it does not include, His coming. Now when the seventh seal is opened there is nothing but a hush in heaven, unless we take the seven trumpets as an elaboration of the seventh seal. If this is so, then the seventh trumpet must also include the actual coming of Christ. And is not this exactly what it is? For the voices in heaven are loud in their proclamation. "*The world kingdom became our Lord's and His Christ's, and He shall be reigning for the eons of the eons!*" Both the seals and the trumpets take us to His advent.

As the bowls are the *last* of these calamities, we are

led to the conviction that *the seals, the trumpets and the bowls all continue until His coming.* Having fixed their terminus, we are ready to inquire as to their beginning. The seals, of course, cover the entire period, as the first seal is the chronological commencement of the vision. Nothing is said of any trumpets until after the seventh seal is opened. The trumpets were given to the messengers after this seal was opened, hence we cannot well come to any other conclusion than that the seven trumpets *are* the seventh seal (8:1, 2). None of the trumpets or woes has anything in common with the first six seals. They evidently are later judgments. This is true, however, only of the trumpets themselves, not of the explanatory visions of the little scroll, the temple measurement and the two witnesses. These refer back to the middle of the heptad, under the fifth seal. *These are not trumpet judgments* but parenthetic preparatory visions, hence should not cloud our consideration of the time when the actual trumpet judgments occur. If we count all the periods introduced in this manner we shall never confine this judgment period to seven years. Unlike the seventh seal, which is nothing but a hush, unless it comprises the seven trumpets, the seventh trumpet gives us a definite and glorious conclusion.

The temple section, which follows, commences an entirely new line of thought. Perhaps we emphasize this too strongly, but it seems to need even more emphasis. Not that this section is not concerned with the same people and the same places, but they are viewed from distinct and diverse standpoints. Nor, indeed, are we to suppose that worship is excluded from the preceding throne section or government from the temple section. When we speak of Luke's account of our Lord's life as a portrayal of Him as a Man, we do not imply that He was not a Man in the other accounts. Matthew gives us the King, Mark the Servant, and John the Son of God. This does not hinder Matthew from recording Peter's confes-

sion that He is the Son of God. Such a characterization of the "Gospels" is not more helpful than a recognition that the section of the Unveiling which commences at the end of the eleventh chapter with the opening of the *temple* introduces us to the distinctly religious part of the book. When the *throne* appeared we were engaged with *rule*. Now we are particularly occupied with *worship*. Hence the added severity of these judgments and their special connection with the priest nation.

But *when* do the bowl judgments begin? When we are introduced to them special stress is laid on the fact that they are *the last* of the calamities—"seeing that in them God's fury is consummated" (15:1). Are we not fully warranted in concluding that these are grouped at the very close of the judgment period? If they are the *last*, how can others come after them? They seem to synchronize with the seventh trumpet. Otherwise they could not be the consummating calamities.

The remarkable resemblance between the trumpets and bowls (especially the first four) seems to suggest the possibility that the bowls might be the trumpet judgments intensified and localized. But the closer this is considered the more untenable it becomes. The seven bowls are the *last* calamities (Un. 15:1). None of them can take place before the trumpets have sounded.

Though not mentioned in this Unveiling, the periods spoken of at the end of Daniel's prophecy are most helpful in fixing some of its events, especially the resurrection and the beginning of the thousand years. Daniel dates his days from the middle of the seventieth heptad, when the daily offering ceases (Dan. 12:11-13). Thence he counts one thousand two hundred and ninety days, when, we infer, it is resumed. This will be thirty days after Christ's epiphany on the Mount of Olives.

Furthermore, the resurrection seems to take place forty-five days later—a thousand three hundred and thirty-five days from the momentous middle of the hep-

tad. On this day the thousand years begin their blessed course, for the saints who are raised live and reign with Christ a thousand years. No wonder Daniel is told "Blessed is he that waiteth" (Dan. 12:12) and John exclaims "Happy and holy is he who is having a part in the former resurrection!" (Un. 20:6).

In a previous vision the cessation of the daily offering is the subject of anxious inquiry. How long till the justification of a sanctuary? This may include the erection of that wonderful edifice portrayed by Ezekiel. It will be built in the holy oblation, north of Jerusalem. From this we infer that it will be dedicated nearly three years after the resurrection—accurately, nine hundred sixty-five days. This will be the two thousand three hundred days after the middle of the heptad (Dan. 8:14).

LITERAL OR FIGURATIVE

THIS scroll has suffered so severely from attempts to force a "figurative" meaning on every expression, that no solid progress can be expected until we settle upon some definite principle to decide what is to be taken literally and what is expressed in the form of a figure.

It is a fundamental fact in all literature, that the literal leads. Every writing is taken literally until some necessity arises which makes it impossible to understand it so. It is only when we are forced to do so that we find a figure.

And why should not this rule hold in our reading of this revelation? John N. Darby, who has been called the greatest student of the Scriptures in the nineteenth century, once remarked to a friend, "Literal, if possible!" If this rule had been followed by all who seek to open up this scroll, the amazing interpretations which have clouded it would never have arisen.

Well do I remember the veil cast over this *unveiling* by the first serious advice I received to aid me in my search into its true meaning. It was pointed out that it was *signified*, that is *sign-ified*—made known by signs or symbols. Hence I was not to expect anything literal. All was figurative. It is needless to say that the book became a puzzle. Progress in unraveling it seemed out of the question.

Finally, this statement seemed so contrary to fact and common sense, that the word *signified* was studied by means of a concordance, to discover whether it retained its etymological meaning in actual usage. I found that it no more means "to make known by signs"

in Greek than it does in English. In fact its common English significance is precisely that which it has in all its occurrences in the Scriptures.

When Festus desired to *signify* Paul's crimes to Cæsar, he did it in *writing* (Acts 25:26-27). There is not the slightest hint that the "signs" were anything more than the letters of the alphabet. Thus, too, the Lord's plain statement that He would be lifted up, *signified* what death He would die (John 12:33; 18:32). He signified Peter's death in terms most literal: "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not" (John 21:18, 19).

The fact that this scroll is *not* a series of signs is finally confirmed by the further fact that it contains signs. There are three distinct signs: the woman clothed with the sun (12:1), the dragon (12:3), and the seven messengers having the last seven calamities (15:1). One of the curious anomalies of the common version is that, in the last passage it speaks of "*another* sign," when it had not mentioned any before this. The two previous "signs" are mistranslated "wonders."

Besides these signs the false prophet has the power to do great signs so that he draws down fire from heaven (13:13-14; 19:20). The spirits of demons, too, that gather the kings of the earth to the great battle, are able to do signs, to accredit their mission (16:14). Indeed, it will be a time in which signs abound.

The common version translates this word "wonders," "miracles" and "signs" in this one book. The Concordant version, which we follow, renders them all alike, reserving "wonders" and "miracles" for other Greek words which they actually represent. A sign is neither a "wonder" (or power) nor a "miracle," but an act or representation to which special *significance* is attached. Every item of the description of the sun-clothed woman and the diademed dragon and the seven

messengers who pour out the seven bowls enables the reader who knows the alphabet of Scripture figures, to fix a literal meaning on the representations which are pictured by these signs.

In our effort to discriminate between the literal and the figurative we may well begin with these signs and acknowledge that they are not literal, but figurative. There is no woman, no dragon; there are no actual bowls of calamities. These are representative of the ideas which they convey.

Another law which we may lay down as axiomatic is this: *The explanation of a figure is literal: it must not be forced into a figure.* Simple and sensible as this rule is, its non-observance has caused much confusion and still obscures large sections of this scroll. It will profit us to linger in the light of this principle and consider all the passages in which a figure is explained. In each case we will be able to fix on one part as figurative, and another as literal.

One of the most notable and important passages to which this rule applies fixes the interpretation of the whole prophetic section, comprising the letters to the seven ecclesias in the second and third chapters. It is a question of principal importance whether to take these epistles as they stand and interpret them as literal ecclesias in the Lord's day or whether they have some mystic significance, such, for instance, as that advocated by Miller's Church History, in which the ecclesias are representative of successive eras of church history from the days of the Acts until the present time. It may seem cruel to shatter such an elaborate and interesting application of these letters, yet no one who wishes to be true to God and his own conscience can cleave to this system when once he becomes aware of the fact that it denies God's own explanation.

To begin with, these ecclesias are presented to us under a figure—seven lampstands—just as their mes-

sengers appeared as stars. Now we may be just as positive that there will be literal messengers as we are that there will *not* be literal stars. Let us settle this once for all. The stars are figurative, the messengers literal. The messengers do not represent anything else, or they, too, would be figurative. If they are figures, then their explanation may be figurative and we are but at the beginning of an endless series which leads nowhere. Let us avoid all this confusion by insisting that God's explanation is final. The stars are *messengers* and nothing else (1:20).

The same inexorable logic applies to the lampstands and the ecclesias. We have no difficulty with the lampstands: they are figurative. We should have no difficulty with the ecclesias, for, by the same token, they are literal. In the day of the Lord (to which the vision applies) there will be seven ecclesias in Asia Minor in the places designated, in which the Jews will have synagogues and companies of believers called out to worship Jehovah. To them these epistles will apply just as Paul's letter to the Romans was for the ecclesia in Rome, and all his letters to the seven ecclesias to which he wrote were written for and delivered to those for whom they were penned. We derive instruction from these letters for our use and, no doubt, all the ecclesias in the Lord's day will derive help and guidance from the seven letters John wrote to the seven assemblies. But we cannot take the contents of these letters to ourselves any more than those in that day can take Paul's epistles for their guidance. If they go to Paul's letters they will find them full of grace for the nations, while all around are evidences of God's furious indignation against the nations. They will find that Israel's prior place is suppressed, yet all the while Jehovah is asserting and establishing the supremacy of His earthly people. They will read of a heavenly destiny all out of line with their own hopes and expectations.

And if we seek to take the contents of these letters to ourselves we will suffer the same confusion. The grace of Paul's epistles is displaced by deeds. Instead of sin calling for more grace, there are threats. The promises are all placed in earthly scenes in which we have no allotment. But all this is not necessary to establish the great fact which cannot be gainsaid: *the ecclesias are literal and must not suffer any further explanation.*

The next example of this kind concerns the seven torches of fire which were burning before the throne (4:5). These are explained as the seven spirits of God. When we remember that God makes His messengers *blasts* and His officers a *flame of fire* (Heb. 1:7), it is quite plain that these seven spirits are not a figurative designation of God's holy spirit, but literally seven spirits, who appear elsewhere as the seven messengers who blow the trumpets and who pour out the bowls filled with the last calamities. These same spirits are seen again under a different figure. They are the seven horns and seven eyes of the Lambkin. We shall consider this notable figure again.

The incense which was burning in the golden bowls is explained as the prayers of the saints (5:8). We are happy to say, there has been no attempt to transform these prayers into anything else.

SIMILE AND METAPHOR

There are times when the usual statement of the case is reversed and we are told that that which is literal is, or is represented by, a figure. This is a true metaphor. The simplest figure, if such it may be called, is a simile. It simply states that one thing is *like* another. "All flesh is *as* grass" is a simile. "All flesh is grass" is a metaphor. The two witnesses are undoubtedly literal men. Their descriptions as "the two olive trees" and "the two lamps" are apt figures connect-

ing them with ancient predictions and describing their ministry with far more force and feeling than any lengthy literal description could possibly do.

The great dragon is a figure which never seems to have caused any difficulty, but which has never, so far as is known, been closely examined. It is one of the three remarkable composite figures which will engage our attention again.

In order to mobilize the armies of the world at Harmageddon, three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the wild beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. By the figure of simile we know that the frogs are but a figure—the spirits are *like* frogs. Hence we are prepared for the explanation: they are spirits of demons (16:13-14).

The double explanation given to the seven heads of the wild beast (17:9-10) is perhaps the most perplexing in the whole scroll. They are said to represent seven mountains where the woman is sitting on them and they are seven kings. The common version obscures this latter explanation by reading it “And *there* are seven kings.” It is clear, however, from Daniel’s vision that the beast is a composite of four kingdoms. Daniel 7:17 should read *kingdoms* instead of *kings* (as in the LXX) and its *heads* are, of course, *kings*. The ten horns are also as we have it in Daniel, “ten kings that shall arise” (Dan. 7:24). The heads and horns, therefore, are figurative, while the kings are literal. It is evident from this that in those days there will be a reaction and kings will again find their place in the politics of this world.

It is evident that the false woman identified with Babylon is altogether a figure of speech. We are told also that the waters on which she is seated are figures of peoples and throngs and nations and languages (17:15).

The woman herself is definitely described as “the great city which has a kingdom over the kings of the

earth." Here we must pause. This woman has been explained in so many ways, all of which are contrary to and subversive of God's own explanation, that it will be difficult for us to believe God and reject what has been so loudly trumpeted in our ears by learned and godly men. No one will deny that Luther was a good man, but that is no reason why all his words were infallible. His hatred of Rome led him to use every weapon he could find against the Papacy. And the Church of Rome must not be confounded with a *city*. *It is a religious system, having its headquarters chiefly at Rome, but now having its own separate political jurisdiction.* Even Rome was ruled by a Jew for many years. We must look elsewhere for a *city* having a sovereignty over the kings of the earth. And it is evident that this city is not Rome but Babylon. There is absolutely no reason for calling any other city Babylon than the one on the banks of the Euphrates, the city which alone has witnessed three world empires. Even Pagan Rome never ruled over all the earth. Babylon was never its capital. Babylon, then, is *literal*: its figure is the scarlet woman.

In blessed contrast with the gaudy strumpet, the wife of the Lambkin is clothed in clean shining cambric, for the cambric is the just awards of the saints. So we cannot be positive that the saints in the millennium will go about dressed in white any more than that the heavenly hosts will always wear that color! The garments are a figure of their just awards (19:8).

The last instance of this sort is very plain. The new Jerusalem, we are told, has no temple. And then we are immediately informed that it *has* a temple, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lambkin are its temple. Is it not clear that a literal temple there will be none, but that its place will be filled by the divine dignities Whose Presence sanctified the temples of former ages?

If we wish to understand this prophecy let us take

heed to this simple maxim: *God's explanations are final and literal*; we dare not improve upon them. The seven lampstands are seven ecclesias—nothing more. The faithless woman is a city—nothing else. As the faithful woman is Jerusalem, so the unfaithful one is Babylon.

THE COMPOSITE FIGURES

The three notable composite symbols of this scroll are well worth special study and consideration. The first is the Lambkin, which takes the scroll and opens its seven seals. It has seven horns and seven eyes, which we are told are the seven spirits of God who are commissioned for the entire earth. We are acquainted with the figure of a bride as associated with the Lambkin in the rule of the millennial earth. We are familiar with the figure of the body of Christ, through which He administers the celestial realms. But very little has been said of His relation to the spirit world. Yet it is evident that, in the execution of the judgments of this book, He is assisted by the seven messengers who blow the seven trumpets. Is it not these who are figured by the seven horns (symbols of power) and the seven eyes (symbols of discernment)? Often does our Lord enforce the fact that His helpers in this era are the "angels" or messengers. The work of the harvest at the end of the eon is done by His messengers. They sever the wicked from among the just and reap the harvest (Mat. 13:39-49). When the Son of Man comes in His glory He will be accompanied by all the holy messengers (Mat. 25:31; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26). Paul speaks of the unveiling of the Lord Jesus as the time when He will come with His mighty messengers.

THE WILD BEAST

The wild beast is another notable composite symbol. Combining in its make-up all the four beasts of the seventh of Daniel, it is evident that it represents

a world-confederacy in which there are four distinct characteristic groups, represented by the four animals, as well as seven kings, figured by the seven heads, and by ten military powers, symbolized by the ten horns.

While the wild beast, in the common version, seems to be a single man, it is evident that the Concordant Version gives the proper impression by using the pronoun *it*, rather than *he*, when referring to it, for it includes many kings in its composition. One of its heads, which was wounded to death and survives the stroke obtains special recognition, but the beast is not limited to one of its heads. It includes the whole politico-ecclesiastic organization of the world.

This disposes of many theories about the "mark" of the beast, which build upon the supposition that it is a single individual. It is rather the symbol, the international emblem for the whole earth, which is meant by the "mark" of the beast. So also with the number of the beast. Led on by the statement that it is the number of "a man", many fanciful applications have been devised and the number fastened upon numberless men from Nero to Napoleon, and many others.

The number of the wild beast is the number of *man-kind*, not of a single individual. To wear the number, or the name or the emblem of the wild beast will be the highest form of international patriotism. What the flag of the fatherland is to the patriot of today, such will be the emblem of the wild beast in the coming era.

It is remarkable that the dragon appears in a form which is almost an exact counterpart of the wild beast. It has seven heads and ten horns. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that we have here the spirit rulers of the world in whose hands the wild beast is but a puppet. Truly "the heavens do rule." It will be a righteous rule in the days to come, but now it is the "world rulers of darkness." How little do we realize that Satan is the god of this eon, just as Christ will be

the God of the eons in that day (2 Cor. 4:4). How thoroughly Satan dominates world powers will be evident when the dragon appears with an organization, a close counterpart of the world federation of which he has been the chief organizer. In the dragon we must include Satan's staff of executives just as the Lambkin with seven horns includes the executives of Christ. It is the organized confederacy of God's enemies in the spirit world.

It would be too irksome a task to sort out all the figures from the literal groundwork of this book. A few suggestions must suffice.

In the introductory vision there is One *like* a son of mankind. The vision is figurative as are all the references to it in the seven letters that follow. But these epistles themselves are *literal*, though, of course, they may, at times, use figures to enforce their messages. The promises, too, are usually to be taken literally.

This principle will solve those puzzling passages, as the ten days' tribulation, spoken of in the Smyrnan letter. There will not be ten *years* of persecution, or ten persecutions, but an affliction lasting ten *days*. In Philadelphia are those claiming to be Jews and are not. How can this be taken? Who wants to be a Jew today? Too often the Jews claim to be gentiles to escape persecution. Leave it literal and in the day of the Lord, and all difficulties vanish.

In the great visions that follow, the heavenly setting is usually a magnificent figure. No one takes the central Figure of all—the Lambkin—as literal. Neither is the scroll and its seven seals, or the trumpets, or the bowls. The action which these introduce is also couched in the language of feeling rather than the language of fact. But *the effects on earth* are almost always strictly literal.

The four horses, for example, are symbols of swift,

impetuous action. But the conquests, the wars, the famine, the pestilence will be fearful facts. So with the succeeding judgments, the burning of the trees, the mountain of fire falling into the sea, the star falling on the rivers and springs, the eclipse of the sun—all of which affect a third part—must be taken quite literally.

So with the numbers in this scroll. There is every reason to take them as they stand. Make them symbolic and they immediately become unruly. Why should there not be exactly one hundred and forty-four thousand celibates? And why should not the two witnesses testify twelve hundred and sixty days? If we make these days years then the witnesses themselves must be “spiritualized,” and if we deny these two a place among men, then the whole book becomes a phantasmagoria in which nothing has any stable meaning.

Literal if possible!

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 1:1-3

THE UNVEILING of Jesus Christ, which God gives to Him, to show to His slaves what must occur swiftly: and He signifies it, dispatching through His messenger to His slave, John, ² who testifies to the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, whatever he perceived.

³ Happy is he who is reading and they who are hearing the word of the prophecy, and who are keeping that which is written in it, for the era is near.

CHAPTER 22:18-21

¹⁸I am testifying to everyone who is hearing the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If ever anyone may be appending to them, God will be appending to him the calamities which have been written in this scroll. ¹⁹And if ever anyone should be eliminating from the words of the scroll of this prophecy, God will be eliminating his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this scroll.

²⁰ He Who is testifying these things is saying: 'Yea, I am coming swiftly'."

"Amen! Be coming, Lord Jesus!"

²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints! *Amen!*

THE INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION

JESUS CHRIST unveiled! Such is the result we may expect from our studies in this scroll. And who would not hail with joy every word that discovers Him? We may linger fondly over the pages that speak of His humiliation, veiled in mortal flesh, obscure, rejected, and cast out, but we long for the day when He receives His reward. The saints shall all receive awards for their feeble and faulty efforts to please Him. Surely He will receive His deserts as well.

Let us never lose sight of this as we pursue the study of this prophecy. Let us not lose ourselves amidst the lightning and the thunder, the trumpets and the bowls. These are nothing in themselves. It is only as they serve to unveil Him to our gaze that we are really able to enjoy such tremendous exhibitions of wrath.

Paul was taught his evangel through the unveiling of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:12). That was a specimen apocalypse which well illustrates the great principles which must always prevail where He is unveiled. His purpose was one of richest grace. It was fraught with transcendent blessing. Yet what were the immediate effects? Much the same as the judgments which John saw. The men were stricken to the ground and Paul himself was blinded by the brightness of the light. Who would have imagined this tragedy was the prelude to the transcendent grace which Paul preached? So we must view the terrible tribulations which preface the eons of the eons. Short, sharp and swift is God's strange work: long will the blessing it brings linger with Israel and the nations for the eons of the eons.

God gives this unveiling to Him to show to His slaves what must occur swiftly. As we proceed it will be in point to show why we prefer to use the Concordant Version in these studies rather than the so-called Authorized. This version, due to the principles on which it is compiled, is *bound* to give a more accurate and correct rendering than is possible where no fixed law is obeyed but each passage is presented as appears best to the translators.

We may be asked, why prefer *slaves* to *servants*? The common version uses *servant* for six distinct Greek words, which, in the Concordant Version, are assigned distinct expressions, corresponding to their meaning. They are *servant*, *retainer*, *domestic*, *boy* or *page*, *deputy*, and *slave*, the word here used. Later versions have used or suggested *bond-servant*. But what is this but a *slave*? Who speaks of a "bond-servant" in current English? A few of the many occurrences of this word will convince us that it means not a hired *servant* but a bought *slave*. Let us call the translators themselves into the witness stand. At least six times they found it in contrast with "free". Then they translated it "bond". In 1 Co. 12:13 the members of Christ are one body "whether we be *bond* or free". In Gal. 3:28 we find that in Christ "there is neither *bond* nor free". In Eph. 6:8 two kinds of servants are in view, "*bond* or free". In Col. 3:11 we learn that the new humanity ignores such a distinction as "*bond* or free". In this Unveiling the false prophet causes all "rich and poor, free and *bond*" to receive the symbol of the wild beast (13:16) and the birds are invited to feast on "the flesh of all, free and *bond*" (19:18). Once they translate it "bondman" (6:15). Thus we need go no further than the translators were forced to go when they found this word used in an antithesis, where its meaning was sharply and clearly revealed by contrast with its opposite. All that the Concordant Version does is to apply this consistently.

This Unveiling, then, is intended for *slaves*. It is true the Alexandrian Codex has *saints*. And it is also true that the scribe of Codex Sinaiticus wrote *saints*. But the editor of this valuable text corrected it to *slaves*. So the best evidence is in favor of this term.

It is not uncommon for the writer of an epistle to call himself a slave. Paul does so often, notably in the opening of the letters to Rome, to Philippi, and to Titus. James, Peter and Jude do the same. But it is most unusual to address a communication *to* such. It is almost always "to the saints". It will help us greatly in opening up this scroll to enter into the significance of this address.

Twice seven times is this term used in this scroll. This suggests the atmosphere in which the prophecy moves. It is concerned with *service*, and weighted with *work*. And this service is performed by slaves. Only once, in the closing scenes, is the promise made "he shall be My son". Sonship is practically absent during the judgment period. Those loyal to God in the ecclesias are called "slaves" (2:20). The one hundred forty-four thousand are "slaves" (7:3). The martyrs are "slaves" (19:2). John himself is called a "slave" (1:1). Let us not intrude the thought of son-service into this scroll.

A simple point, yet one of principal importance, is suggested by the phrase "what must occur swiftly", in place of "which must shortly come to pass". An excellent method of discovering the meaning of a disputed expression is to take it off to another scene where its meaning is clearly apparent from the connection. The question at issue here is whether the interval preceding an action is intended or whether the action itself is in view. Was this prophecy to commence its fulfillment within a short time after John wrote or is it to move swiftly once it begins? On the answer to this our whole position depends. Often the word "shortly" or "soon" seems to fit the word well. But a patient ex-

amination of these texts shows that these words always point to the *end* of the action, hence swiftness might involve the thought of "soon".

Perhaps the most picturesque illustration of its meaning is found in the race between Peter and John on the morning of the resurrection (Jn. 20:4). John and Peter *started* together but John ran more *swiftly* than Peter. This simple incident is conclusive evidence that this Unveiling will be swift in its *execution*, rather than that it was to occur soon after John wrote.

As it has been well nigh two millenniums since these words were penned we are forced to acknowledge either that this apocalypse is past, or that it was not intended to take place "soon". If it is past then the coming of Christ is also past, for He uses the very same words of His return.

On the other hand, if we allow that it means *swiftly*, then all is future, for no occurrences which drag through thousands of years can possibly be characterized as swift. This alone disposes of the attempt to fit the prophetic portion to the history of the church. That would be a slow, not a swift fulfillment.

More than this, the character of God Himself and the nature of His dealing during the present economy are involved in the meaning of this word. This is a period of grace—transcendent grace. That will be an era of severe judgment. The two cannot be mixed. Now God smiles. Then His face will be averted. The present period is prolonged. The coming era will be short. It is the glory of God that He lingers in dispensing grace but hastes in executing judgment. The sharper His strokes, the swifter their culmination.

An exhaustive study of the cumulative judgments of this Unveiling will reveal the fact that, while all is comparatively swift, there is a constant acceleration in its execution. The seals cover years, the trumpets months, but the bowls seem to be poured out in a few

days. Has it not been always thus in God's administration? His judgments are swift and short: His blessings linger long.

This also has a vital bearing on His judgment of the race. It should prejudice us against torment long drawn out, except in extraordinary cases. Our God has never acted thus in His dealings. His established character is against such a course. Right glad are we to know that such will be the manner of His judgments. Will they be sharp? Then they will be short. The mild judgments of the millennium are prolonged. The severe session of the great white throne is short. Such a God is worthy of our worship!

THE CONCLUSION

Turning now to the conclusion (22:20-21) which corresponds with the opening words, we find the same word—swiftly—describing the coming of the Lord Jesus. How we wish that this were not with speed, merely, but *soon* as well! May it be so! All our prejudices—perhaps we may be permitted to call them our *longings*—plead for a perverted translation at this point. But what would it avail? If the common version had used the same words here that it did in the introduction and rendered it “Surely I come *shortly*”, that would not bring Him any sooner! He waits God's appointed time, but when that time does come, the lightning itself will be slow compared with His epiphany.

How hearty the response, “Yea! come, Lord Jesus!” As we proceed in our study we will learn that this refers not to our gathering together unto Him but to His coming to His people Israel. We shall meet Him much sooner than the advent here spoken of. We shall be with Him when the hearts of His slaves are crying for His coming. But until then our hearts echo the words which He has put into their mouths. We, too, cry “*Erchou!* Be coming!”

One word which is constantly recurring in the Concordant Version is the verb *perceive*. Why, we are asked, does the version prefer this word to the common term *see*? Why render it "he perceives" rather than "he saw"? The answer is found in the last chapter (22:8): "And I, John, *heard* these things *and* observed them". Perception includes *hearing* as well as sight. Indeed, we perceive by means of all the organs of sensation. The term "saw" is too narrow. Indeed, it stands for a different word, which is used in 18:18, "When they *saw* the smoke". While our prejudices may plead for the old, well known terms, let us bear in mind that the consistent renderings we use come closer to the thought of the great Revealer. Throughout the scroll there is an appeal to the ear as well as to the eye.

As a further reason for the rendering *perceive*, it may be noted that it is translated "know" in hundreds of instances, thus intruding into the territory of another Greek word. Perceive is an intermediate expression which usually suits better than either "know" or "see".

One of the most perplexing problems in connection with the Greek text is the repeated difference between the Sinaitic, which is by far the best text, and the other two manuscripts with regard to one form of this word. The Sinaitic almost always puts it "perceived"—in the past. The other two usually unite to put it in an irregular form of the indefinite. While it is known that the editor of the Concordant Text had strong leanings toward the indefinite form, he has yielded to the evidence, which, though nearly evenly balanced, slightly favors the oldest and fuller form. It would be easier for the copyists to leave out the initial "E" in later years, than for the earlier scribe to insert it. It makes but a slight change in the Version and is not at all vital to the sense. After the first strangeness wears off, the rendering *perceive* will be appreciated and enjoyed. Let us bear with the true, not follow the false.

THE BENEDICTION

The notable concord which we have perceived between the Introduction and Conclusion is still more strikingly exhibited in the Benediction and the Curse. The prominent place which these are given at the very commencement and consummation of the scroll bids us lay a heavy emphasis upon their message.

Few, indeed, have found the happiness which ought to be the portion of the reader and of the hearers of this prophecy. In fact, few of the saints give it any serious study. As to any happiness coming out of this judgment scroll (no one even attempts to *keep* what he does not understand)—that seems out of the question. How can such awful visitations and mysterious calamities make anyone happy?

We want to be happy. We want the happiness which comes from the perusal of this prophecy. We do not wish to devote ourselves to this study as a dreary duty.

The reason given why there is happiness here is that *the era is impending*. Let us get the gist of this. Let us first divest ourselves of the idea we may have taken from the phrase “the time is at hand”. The word “time” here is not the one which they have rendered thus in the phrase “there shall be *time* no longer”, but a special word meaning *season*. As usual, they have given us a good rendering of both of these synonyms where they occur together as in Acts 1:7. There we read of “the *times* or the *seasons*”. It is greatly to be regretted that they did not register their own distinction in all the other occurrences. Then, in Un. 6:11, instead of rendering “should rest yet for a little *season*” and 20:3 “must be loosed a little *season*”, they would have said *time*, and in 11:18; 12:12, 14 and 22:10, where they say *time*, they should translate *season* or its equivalent. The Concordant Version seeks to avoid this confusion, and yet conform to the niceties of Eng-

lish usage by associating *season*, *era*, *period*, as may best suit, with one word, and *time* (in one case *delay*, for "no longer time") with the others.

But of what use is all this discrimination? Very much, indeed, if we do not want to miss the happiness which hangs upon it. An era, or season is a segment of time having distinct characteristics which mark it off from adjacent segments. As the seasons of the year each have features which define them, so the era here spoken of, which is the burden of the whole book, must not be merged into the common course of time, but must be marked as a unique and notable departure from ordinary eras, introducing a great change or crisis in human history. How much richer and fuller is this thought than that gathered from the phrase "the *time* is at hand"! The history of the eons is like the story of the year. Each succeeding season is adapted to furnish its share toward the ultimate harvest, but the function of each is distinct. This prophecy presents us with an era or season in which many of the prevailing principles of the present are found in autumnal ripeness. What has been in flower, or has formed into fruit will then be ready to pluck and we may taste its real nature and essence. Here lies the great value of this prophecy to us. Here is the secret of the happiness which it brings. We may enjoy an insight into the heart of things which would be difficult to discern without its aid. We are happy to avoid the subtle snares that beset our path. We are glad to escape the great delusion which is so alluring to all except those who have studied this scroll.

Before pursuing this theme further let us ask, what is meant by "the era is *impending*"? From the sub-linear we learn that it literally reads "the season is *near*". It is the usual word for *near* but does not necessarily convey the certainty of absolute nearness which we might infer from its ordinary English usage.

Epaphroditus was near death, yet he recovered and may have lived long afterward (Phil. 2:30). James says that the coming of the Lord is near (James 5:8) yet that was nearly two thousand years ago. The Kingdom of the heavens was near during the period in which our Lord proclaimed it, but it withdrew when He was rejected (Mat. 3:2). The end of all things is near (1 Pet. 4:7) yet this has been the case ever since Peter wrote. It is evident that the word has the secondary meaning of conditional nearness. If the era had been absolutely near when John wrote then it must have been fulfilled long since. There is ample evidence that it has not so much as started even yet. But the conditions in the world have continually been such as to call for this era of judgment, hence it has been impending ever since the words were first penned.

Men are in the dark, not only as to the future, but as to the present as well. If they knew the future they would be able to interpret the present by it. Satan is the god of this eon. He prefers to work in the dark. It is not until the era of this scroll that he openly claims the worship of mankind.

Men count themselves fortunate if they have enough of this world's goods to live in ease for the rest of their lives. But how often are such expectations false! Riches have wings. The future is all unknown. How much would they give if they only knew what it had in store!

This scroll gives certainty and solidity to the future of the earth. Its greatest benison will rest on those of the favored nation who live in the latter days and are delivered from the dreadful delusions which will abound in the day of His indignation.

THE CURSE

Satan's enmity has been particularly directed against this scroll, for no other part of the Scriptures gives the

consummation of his career as plainly as this prophecy. Hence there have been many attempts to exclude it from the canon, and many more efforts to annul its teaching by means of "expositions" and explanations. This passage he would doubtless have removed entirely if possible. How far he has succeeded may be seen when we find the very few manuscripts which contain this closing scroll of Divine revelation containing about seven variants in this verse! As the note in the Concordant Version says: "Who would not suppose that these lines would be most anxiously and scrupulously copied by the scribe? Surely no transcriber would dare to add or subtract a single letter! Yet there is not only one transposition, but four additions and three omissions in a passage fearfully denouncing such a practise."

Needless to say, this curse, from its very nature, can have no application now. We have no part in the tree of life or the holy city to lose, for ours is a celestial allotment. Nor can the calamities written in this scroll fall on us, for there can be no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. We are beyond the reach of wrath. This will not make us lax in regard to this scroll, but rather more rigid and careful, for we judge that, since He is so solicitous about every part, it is our privilege to guard every letter.

How much happier we should be than those to whom this prophecy is directly addressed! The joy of fellowship with Christ in His Unveiling is ours not as slaves, nor in fear of judgment for ourselves, but as one with Him, above and apart from the terrible tide of indignation which will engulf the earth. And we know that it prepares mankind for a flood of blessing such as has not yet been known, for whatever exalts Christ brings blessing to mankind.

THE PROPHETIC PORTIONS

WE now confront the prophetic portions of the Apocalypse, consisting of one long section near the beginning of the scroll (1:4—3:22) and a short section near its end (22:6-17). Before making a minute examination of its details it will help us to take a general survey of its character and scope, its application and object, with special reference to the time and people to whom it is addressed.

In calling these the Prophetic sections, or in dividing the rest of the scroll into Political and Religious sections, we do not wish to be understood as doing more than to point out the general character of each. When we say that Matthew's account sets forth Christ as King, no one supposes that this is the only title used of Him by Matthew, for the main divisions of the narrative are made by the acknowledgment that He is Son of God. Neither is John's account without any record of His regal claim. Yet all will acknowledge the helpfulness of investing Matthew with royal robes, of seeing the Servant in Mark, the Man in Luke and the divine Son in John. It is the introduction which fixes His character in each. The genealogy to David and Abraham in Matthew, to Adam in Luke, its absence in Mark, and His precarnate session in John—these alone fix the dominant character of the succeeding account, however much all His glories may be blended as occasion arises. He serves in all, yet He is the Servant in Mark. He is human in all, yet He

is the Man in Luke. He is divine in all, yet He is the Son of God in John.

So in the Apocalypse. The introductions to the sections can hardly be misunderstood. The magnificent throne scene of the fourth chapter must introduce us to the political side to earth's deliverance, though not excluding worship. The opening of the temple must reveal the religious aspect of redemption, though not debarring power. Rule and religion run throughout the scroll, but rule rises to prominence at one time and religion at another. We should look to the introduction of each section to guide us in our apprehension of its character. Once determined, this will give us a clue to its contents.

The prophet is the sign of apostasy. So long as the priesthood was true and the king ruled in the fear of God, there was no need of any prophet. But when these fail then God raises up a man to be His spokesman to the people. The primary function of prophecy is to interpret the times so that the people may know the mind of God and the conduct which will accord with His will. Prediction is but a part of the prophetic office. The prophetic sections of this scroll are in perfect accord with this conception of prophecy.

When we remember that the great emphasis in this scroll is on judgment we are prepared to see why these ecclesias are not in Palestine, where they ought to be, but far from the land, in the precincts of apostasy. The people as a whole are distant from God, and He finds their representative ecclesias outside the land, beyond the sphere of blessing. Yet the one hundred forty-four thousand are in their true place, on mount Zion, hence their preëminent portion. They need no prophet. But the nation as a whole is at such a distance, spiritually, from their rightful place, as these ecclesias are removed, physically, from Jerusalem.

The Concordant Version uses the word *ecclesia* rather than "church". The word "church" has acquired a meaning quite foreign to that which the etymology of this word demands. Any company CALLED-OUT, as the sublinear has it, is an *ecclesia*. The tribal council in the wilderness wanderings (Acts 7:38), the mob at Ephesus (Acts 19:32, 41), the synagogue worshipers (Mat. 18:17)—all these are really a "church" but would be wholly misunderstood if referred to by that term. So it is here. The very name given to these *ecclesias* has prejudiced us in favor of an interpretation which they will not bear. In the message to the Philadelphian *ecclesia* we read of those who are claiming to be Jews and are not, who are of Satan's synagogue. This lacks all pith and point if the Philadelphians were not themselves Jews and members of a synagogue. Hence we are compelled to consider these "churches" as synagogues such as those referred to by our Lord, in which no tax gatherer or man of another nation could have any place (Mat. 18:17).

As the word "assembly" does not suggest the principal point of an *out-called* company, and is well suited to translate another word, it is not a good substitute for "church". So we are forced to find a new term, uncontaminated, yet not unfamiliar, with which to clothe this idea. "Ecclesia," from its association with "ecclesiastic", etc., is suggested, with the hope that it will never be applied to a building, or restricted to a particular company or economy, but applied to any assembly consisting of members *called out* of a larger number.

THE ECCLESIAS ARE SYNAGOGUES

This suggests the real reason why these companies are called "ecclesias" rather than synagogues. They are not in the land where almost everyone would belong to the local synagogue, but among the nations.

Hence only the Jews in these cities are called out from among the mass of the population to become members of these ecclesias. To call them "churches" would practically exclude the Jews; "ecclesias" allows them to be synagogues, which they undoubtedly will be.

This suggests an important point in reference to their location. They are not found in Jerusalem or Judea, but at a distance in proconsular Asia, a province in Asia Minor, which has since given its name to the whole continent of which it was but a very small part. They belong to the dispersion in the day of the Lord, corresponding to the "sojourners of the dispersion of . . . Asia" to whom the first epistle of Peter was addressed (1 Pet. 1:1).

Indeed, while we limit John's apocalyptic epistles to the Lord's day, Peter's had an immediate application in the past and will be most suitable to the future. The constant emphasis upon suffering and affliction in Peter's letter suits the situation found in these epistles perfectly.

A single consideration should keep us from applying these epistles to the ecclesias of the apostle's day. Two of the early Fathers, Tertullian and Epiphanius say that there was no ecclesia in Thyatira when John wrote these letters. Doubtless this had much to do with the suspicion with which this whole Unveiling was viewed in the early times. Many rejected it altogether. The application to the ecclesias of that day was not at all possible.

Most of the early sects who refused to give this prophecy a place in the canon did so on the ground that John would not write to an ecclesia which had never been heard of. This was the principal argument of Cerdon and Marcion, who repudiated it. The Alogi pointedly asked, "How . . . could he write to an ecclesia which was not in existence?"

We have purposely avoided any explanation of the word "messenger" because of the unusual interest which attaches to the messengers of the seven ecclesias. The rendering "angel" is certainly startling here. None of the ecclesias of Scripture had angels among them. And certain it is that the churches of today are not in charge of angels. Yet, neither are they in charge of messengers.

Before attempting the solution of this problem let us discover the true significance of the word. It is a member of a notable family of words, some of which have found a place in English. We protest that we are not "changing" the common version by our rendering "messenger". The translators always render it so when it refers to human beings, and surely it refers to such in these seven ecclesias. What would be the use of sending these letters to *angels*? The spies sent to search out the land were *messengers* (James 2:25), John the Baptist is thrice called an angel or *messenger* (Mat. 11:10; Mk. 1:2; Lu. 7:27); John sent *messengers* to the Lord (Lu. 7:24); and He sent *messengers* before His face (Lu. 9:52). In all these passages the Authorized translates correctly, "messengers". It is evident, therefore, that this is the true meaning of the word. It has to do with service, not nature. Whether a messenger be a spirit or a human being must be left to the context and the discernment of the reader. We are of the opinion that the "angels" to whom these epistles are sent are simply the messengers of these ecclesias.

There is no such officer in the churches of today. There was none in the churches established by Paul. Where are they to be found?

Only in the synagogue do we find any officer who has any claim to this title. The chief of the synagogue (Mk. 5:22; Acts 18:17), ranked first, but below him was the *sheliach tsibbur*, the legate or messenger of the ecclesia, who was the mouthpiece of the congregation. This is

the one represented by the stars, to whom these letters were addressed. It seems certain, from the opening benediction, that in each case there would be but *one* reader yet *many* hearers. The *sheliach* who received this message would transmit it by reading it publicly to the congregation in the synagogue.

The symbol of the stars reminds us of the two seeds of Abraham. Some are to be like the sea shore sands, others like the stars of heaven. The messengers are evidently God's light-bearers in the world at its darkest hour, just before the dawn. Daniel speaks of these messengers. The versions completely conceal the connection. "The *intelligent* shall *warn* . . . and they that justify many are as the stars for the eon and further" (Dan. 12:3, C.V.).

JOHN A MINISTER OF THE CIRCUMCISION

Having found that the recipients of these epistles are Jews assembled in synagogues, we recall that John was a minister of the Circumcision like His Master (Mat. 15:24; Rom. 15:8). He never was sent to the nations as Paul was. He and Peter made an arrangement with Paul that they should devote themselves to the Circumcision (Gal. 2:7-9). It is evident that he does so in writing this Unveiling.

Between the writings of the Circumcision and Paul's letters there is a vast chasm. Luther was so impressed with this that he had no use for James' epistle, for it seemed to him to contradict the doctrine of Romans. Faith and grace has no place there. It is replaced by faith and *acts*. The gospel for the Circumcision never even approximated the grace reached in Paul's epistles. The doctrine of Romans, "therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace", and the transcendent teaching of the so-called Ephesian epistle, "saved through faith for grace", sheds no radiance upon these ecclesias.

No one who has basked in the beams of such bene-

ficence can enter the cloudy atmosphere of these letters without experiencing a chill. The nearest approach to it is found in James' epistle. Grace and faith are eclipsed by a strong insistence on acts, on endurance, on repentance. Threats are freely offered for failure to live up to the requirements. It is an atmosphere not only darker than the seven letters of Paul but even those of the Circumcision. To apply them to the present economy of grace is subversive of the truth, destructive of the faith and a crime against grace. Grace mingled with acts is no longer grace. What then shall we call acts without any admixture of grace? Let us leave these epistles where they belong, for they are well suited to the day of wrath. Judgment, says Peter (1 Pet. 4:17), must begin from God's house. This is what we have here. How can we confound this with grace going out to aliens, as it is today?

Confirmatory evidence abounds. We will trace it briefly in the allusions and promises in each letter and in the references to the same period which occupy us in the succeeding sections.

It is not simply that these epistles refer us to incidents in Israel's history, but there seems to be a systematic endeavor in these successive references to cover their whole history from the deliverance from Egypt to the period of Minor Prophets. The declension in the ecclesias corresponds closely with the national declension. Their sins and failures will be the sins and failures of their forefathers.

The allusion in the epistle to Ephesus recalls the day of Israel's espousals (Jer. 2:2). In the fervency of her first love there was much glorying in Jehovah and little likelihood of straying from Him. Had they kept this, no apostasy would have appeared. Leaving His love led to the decline which is here traced to its end in being spewed out of His mouth.

In the Smyrnan letter we have a parallel to the wil-

derness wanderings. Israel was tried forty years. They will be tried ten days.

The reference to Balaam, in the letter to Pergamos, takes us on to an incident in the wilderness. Peter speaks of these same people when he warns against those "following out the path of Balaam of Bosor" (2 Pet. 2:15). Jude, writing of those days, also refers to Balaam's error (10-13).

THE KINGDOM ALLUSIONS

The next four allusions are to the kingdom, the first two to Israel and the last two to Judah. In each case there is one allusion to defection and one to rejection.

Jezebel, who is referred to in the letter to Thyatira, made the advice of Balaam the basis of state religion. A sensual religion will be one of the outstanding features of the end time. The church today is fast drifting in that direction. But the full development of this fearful plague awaits that day.

Sardis engages us with the removal of Israel. Their name is practically blotted out, so that no one knows where they are today. Another instance of this "blotting out" occurs in the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand. Jehovah threatened to blot out the tribe which should introduce idolatry in Israel (Deut. 29:18-20). Their names do not appear in the list of the tribes of those who are sealed.

In the Philadelphian letter we turn to Judah. The defection had been great. Uzziah was stricken with leprosy for his presumption in the house of God (2 Chr. 26:19). Jotham did not enter it at all (2 Chr. 27:2). Ahaz shut up its doors (2 Chr. 28:24). Hezekiah opened its doors again, but Shebna, the treasurer, had to be deposed. Eliakim is given this trust. The treasures of the temple were at his command.

The Laodicean letter leads us to the end of the long line of declension. Its message savors strongly of the

divine expostulations in the Minor Prophets. Their wretched condition reminds us of Hosea's description (Hosea 2:5-9).

Far more conclusive of the character of these ecclesias are the promises held out to those who are victors. While they allude to the period from Eden to Solomon, their future fulfillment is always found in the earthly sphere where the blessings of Israel are located—never in the celestial realms which are our portion.

As is ever the case, human declension does not hinder God's blessing. While the condition of these ecclesias corresponded with the apostasy of the nation, the promises ascend from blessing to blessing. The conqueror in the first ecclesia has the promise of life while in the last, Laodicea, a place on the throne is prepared for the victorious one.

In Ephesus the allusion takes us back to Eden and the tree of life in its midst. But the promise reaches forward to the new earth and the tree of life in the center of that paradise. What part can we have in that garden? Shall we descend from our place with Christ on His celestial throne?

In Sardis the allusion is to the entrance of death when Adam sinned. The promise reaches out to the second death, from which the conqueror is promised immunity (20:14). Our life is hid with Christ in God. We may not all be conquerors, but all who believe in this day of grace have all that is promised to this conqueror and far more.

The manna recalls the wilderness journey of Israel. It provides for the sustenance of the conqueror of Pergamos. The white pebble was probably one of those used in the casting of lots. Hence this pebble would entitle the conqueror to an allotment in the kingdom. Is that our hope?

In Thyatira this thought rises higher. The conqueror is promised authority over the other nations.

Here we are reminded how they left the wilderness and conquered the nations in the land. In the kingdom to come the conqueror of this ecclesia will be given the morning star. Before Christ arises as the sun, He will crush the nations and rule them with an iron club. In this will the Thyatiran conqueror have a share. This could never be our work.

We are reminded of David's last words in the promise to the conqueror in Sardis. He confesses the names of the conquerors of his host and blots out the names of those who are vanquished (2 Sam. 23). So will the "mighty man" who conquers in Sardis be rewarded. His name will not be blotted out but confessed before the Father and the messengers. Our names are not in the book of life, hence they cannot be blotted out. Christ Himself is our life.

The promise to the Philadelphian conqueror brings to mind the magnificent temple built by Solomon with its wonderful columns, "Jachin and Boaz". A place in millennial worship seems to be their reward, as well as a title to the New Jerusalem. Neither of these would be any inducement to one who knows the place which has become ours in Christ.

The Laodicean conqueror having most to meet, will reap the richest reward. The allusion to Israel's kings leads on to the future King of kings. A seat on His throne, association with Him in the administration of that kingdom is the desert of those who dare to stem the tide of Laodicean apostasy.

All of these promises, from life to a place of privilege in the kingdom, are confined to the conquerors. They are not promised to any of the unfaithful members of the synagogue. *Not one of them can be realized by a member of the body of Christ*, for they are all in a sphere foreign to our expectations. All are fulfilled on earth. Most of them have to do with that kingdom which is the chief subject of this scroll. A

place of rule in that kingdom can never be the portion of the nations, for it is the time of Israel's rule over the nations.

THE SECOND PROPHETIC PORTION

The twenty-second chapter of this scroll should have commenced at the sixth verse. There the visions end, and the prophetic strain is resumed. "The God of the spirits of the prophets" takes up the subject of the whole scroll and its relation to His slaves.

The time element in this final chapter is important to its proper understanding. At first John is represented as being present and beholding the holy city. Then, in the third verse, there is a change in the tense: all is *future*. The vision has ended and John reverts to Patmos. From this point he views the far-off future.

But when we enter the prophetic section the future is no longer before us. All is present. His coming cannot be postponed to that far off day. The whole course of events recorded in the scroll is in review.

The spirit of this concluding section is the same as its counterpart. Even the prospect of His return is associated with service, for He says, "My *wage* is with Me, to *pay* each one as his *work* is". *They* rinse their robes to gain the right to enter the city. Those whose *conduct* unfits them for it, will find no place in the city. The water of life alone is free. Yet even those who have a part in that future bliss may lose it by tampering with this scroll. It is as their *Lord* that they look for His coming.

All this will be very precious to those of the Circumcision for whom it is intended. It may appeal to the legalistic church-goer of today, but it falls far short of the favor which is ours in Christ Jesus.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 1:4-8

⁴ John, to the seven ecclesias which are in the province of Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him Who is, and Who was, and Who is coming, and from the seven spirits which are in sight of His throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the Faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Suzerain of the kings of the earth.

To Him Who is loving us and looses us from our sins by His blood ⁶ and makes us a kingdom and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and might for the eons of the eons! *Amen!* ⁷ *Lo!* He is coming with clouds, and every eye will be seeing Him—those, also, who stab Him—and all the tribes of the land will be grieving over Him. *Yea! Amen!*

⁸ “I am the A and the Z,” the Lord God is saying, “Who is, and Who was, and Who is coming, the Almighty.”

THE PROPHETIC SECTION

INTRODUCTION

FIRST things are important. The introduction to the Prophetic Section is as much a key to its understanding as the general introduction was to the whole scroll.

Before the vision which precedes the seven letters we have a rich prelude, including an invocation, an ascription and a divine response. As these describe to us the characters which God and Christ, as well as His messengers, assume, and define for us the people to whom they are addressed, it will repay us to linger here for a little.

The source of the grace and peace which John invokes upon them is threefold: Jehovah, the seven spirits, and Jesus Christ. A similar grouping is to be found in 1 Tim. 5:21, where the chosen messengers are associated with God and Christ Jesus. Each one of the three Who are invoked is presented with new and striking appellations. Jehovah is expanded into its Greek equivalent. Jesus Christ is brought before us in His humiliation, His resurrection, and His glorification on the earth.

The two great titles of God which dominate the Hebrew Scriptures are Elohim and Jehovah. The very first sentence of Genesis defines Elohim for us as the One connected with the heavens and the earth. He is the God of *space*.

The universe may be analyzed into two elements: space and time. As it was created out of God we may reasonably expect God Himself to appear in some definite relation to these two essential principles.

This is just what we find in the divine records. Space is associated with Elohim, time with Jehovah. But there is a vast difference between these two elements. Space is stable; time is fleeting, evanescent. What was future yesterday may be past today. The present itself is but the meeting point of the past and the future. This is reflected in the title which stands for time. Too often Jehovah is used as a synonym of Absolute Deity. This is not so in the Scriptures. It is one of God's assumptions which eventually vanishes.

Jehovah is the God of the eons. He is especially associated with the eonian nation, Israel. Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures He is never acknowledged as the God of any other nation. Outside of the Unveiling the Greek Scriptures make no effort to express the significance of the Hebrew name. The title "Lord" is used quite indiscriminately for Jehovah or Adonai. Here, however, there is a systematic effort made to reëstablish the old relation between Jehovah and the people with whom He had made the covenant, and this begins by proclaiming His name.

There is considerable divergence in the more modern views as to the pronunciation and derivation of the title Jehovah. As the Jews never pronounced it, and the Massoretic vowels with which it is usually furnished belong either to Adonai or Elohim (which were substituted for it in the oral reading) no one really knows how it was anciently spoken. An investigation of the Hebrew alphabet has fixed the probable pronunciation as *Ieue*, or *Yehweh*.

Some take the name as a simple statement of absolute existence from the Hebrew verb *being*. Others derive it from two forms of the verb *to be*, the so-called *future* and *past*. Another explanation, however, just as agreeable to the Hebrew, is in closest accord with the interpretation of the spirit of God in the Unveiling. This

makes it a compound of three forms of *to be*: *future*, *present* and *past*, or, rather, the nearest approach to this which is possible in Hebrew.

In three passages (Un. 1:4, 8; 4:8) we have all three elements of time brought before us in the effort to render the incommunicable name into Greek. This may appear cumbersome, but it has the great advantage of setting forth each element distinctly and, what is still more important, allows for variation in their order. The following shows the Hebrew components and the variations in the Unveiling.

Hebrew: *He will be—Being—He was*

Un. 1:4, 8: *Being—Who was—Who is coming*

Un. 4:8: *Who was—Being—Who is coming*

Un. 11:17; 16:5: *Being—Who was*

Why this change? Why does a part of the name actually drop off? Are there no critical readings which suggest a restoration to uniformity and conformity to the Hebrew?

There is no reason to believe that these alterations are human errors. Rather, as we examine them, we will find them full of divine truth. Jehovah varies His title to accord with the revelation. In the past all the stress has been laid on His future coming. Hence this element is put first in His name. This continues so long as His advent is viewed from a distance. But when it is imminent the stress is shifted to the great fact that He *is*. When we enter the Unveiling, it is no longer His distant coming, but His powerful presence which the title urges on our attention. To give prominence to this fact, the present tense is rescued from its obscure place in the middle of the title to a forceful position at its front. Thus we have it twice in the introduction to the Prophetic Section.

It is most interesting and illuminating to note how this title is used *after* He *has* come, either in judgment

or in blessing. Then the last part of the title is most appropriately omitted. His name becomes simply "Who art and Who wast" (11:17; 16:5).

How marvelous is the great incommunicable name of Jehovah! Its preciousness lies, not in an absolute and unyielding tyranny over time, but in its flexible adaptation to the times so that a part of it actually retires when its function has been performed. Who would have Him eternally coming, but never arriving? Would not that be the torture of Tantalus? He is the Coming One only during His absence. That part of His name glorifies Him most by being laid aside. In the eons of the eons the sacred name will be shortened by the fulfillment of its promise. When the times of the eons are past the remainder will doubtless have been fulfilled and give place to the closer and more cordial conception of God which it is calculated to introduce into the hearts of His creatures. One name will then be His, and that name is *Father*. All nations will then be members of His family and the objects of His love.

The association of the seven spirits with Jehovah and Christ has been vigorously contested by almost everyone who seeks to unfold this scroll. As these seven spirits are mentioned in between Christ and Jehovah there is no way of dissociating them. The usual plan is to make them figurative emblems of God's spirit. But such an artifice will not work in the other passages where these spirits are mentioned, nor does it account for the facts. We know that seven spirits, or seven messengers *are* associated with Christ in the execution of these judgments. The seven trumpets and seven bowls are in the hands of messengers. In fact, much more of the ministry of messengers is evident in this scroll than of Christ Himself. Why, then, should they not enter into the introduction and wish grace and peace upon the ecclesias? In the throne scene these seven spirits appear as torches of

fire (4:5). On the Lambkin they are seven horns and seven eyes (5:6). It would be most unfortunate for us to rid the introduction of these seven spirits simply because it conflicts with human inferences in regard to the "Trinity".

We are told that they are commissioned for the entire earth (5:6). The serpent and the wild beast distribute their world-wide sovereignty to seven heads. They doubtless copy this from the divine administration. In the tenth of Daniel the curtain is withdrawn for a moment and we are allowed a glimpse behind the scenes. We find that even Israel has a "prince" (Dan. 10:21). That this is not Christ is evident, for he is called "one of the chief princes" (Dan. 10:13). God's Anointed could take no such subordinate place (Heb. 1:9).

Then there are the princes of Persia and Javan, or Greece (Dan. 10:20). It is evident that there *are* seven spirits commissioned for the entire earth and these take a most prominent part in this Unveiling. All attempts to ignore or expunge them are unavailing. They do not administer the future inhabited earth (Heb. 2:5) but they are the executives of Christ during this judgment era, before Israel is placed at the helm.

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, is here presented, as He usually is in the writings of the Circumcision, with reference to His humiliation, as the Faithful Witness; His resurrection, as the Firstborn of the dead; and His coming glory, as the Suzerain of the kings of the earth. These are earthly honors. His heavenly dignities (with which *we* are so vitally concerned) have little or no place in this description of Him.

Little is said of the Lord's witness until we come to the writings of John, the same one who received this Unveiling. He speaks of it more than all the other writers. But why, we may ask, is this aspect of His ministry suggested here? Because this is the one great need

of the era which is covered by this prophecy. He was a *faithful* Witness—even to death. What better Example could be set before them? They too, are called upon to bear faithful testimony and, in countless cases, it will cost them their lives.

The *Firstborn* of the dead is another suggestive and comforting title. Death will be robbed of its terrors to a large extent for those who know Him as the Firstborn of the dead. They, too, may look forward to a blessed resurrection if they should lose their lives on account of their testimony.

Indeed, this title goes much further than resurrection. It includes vivification beyond the reach of death. Our Lord was not the first to be raised from the dead. He Himself raised others, such as Lazarus. But theirs was but a recall to the life they had before. They were subject to death as before. He and those who are His in His presence will be made alive, or vivified.

And more than this, those who bear faithful witness in that day will not only partake of His life but will share His throne when He becomes the Suzerain of the kings of the earth. "Happy and holy is he who is having a part in the former resurrection; over these the second death has no jurisdiction, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and they will be reigning with Him the thousand years" (20:6).

How precious is their response to the heart of the Lord! "To Him Who is loving us and looses us from our sins by His blood". We are almost tempted to "apply" these to ourselves, for He *does* love us. To prove it, however, He has done far more than release us from our sins. But the next statement we cannot "apply" without serious injury to ourselves as well as the Circumcision for whom it is intended. He "makes us a kingdom and priests to His God and Father". This can be true of Israel *only*. We are no kingdom. We

are not priests. If we reign, where are our subjects? Paul could say to the Corinthians, "surely you ought to reign!" And if we are priests, for whom do we approach? Thank God, we *all* have access to the Father now and need no priest to hinder our immediate approach to God. But in the days of the promised kingdom Israel alone will rule and Israel alone will serve Him in His temple. The other nations will be subordinate and approach through them.

This was His primeval purpose for them, when He called them out of Egypt to Himself. In the wilderness of Sinai Moses was instructed to speak to them as follows: "*You* saw what I did to the Egyptians. And *you* I bore on vulture's wings and brought you to Me. And now, should you hearken when hearing My voice, and keep My covenant, you shall also come to be especially Mine of all peoples; for Mine is all the earth; and *you* shall become My priest kingdom and holy nation" (Ex. 19:4-6).

Though we are not that holy nation, we cannot but echo their ascription, though, perhaps we would change it slightly. "To Him be glory and might for the eons of the eons! *Amen!*"

In view of the consummation (which is not within the scope of this Unveiling) when the Son subordinates Himself and might is no longer needed, we cannot (as current versions would have us) wish these to be His "for ever and ever". They are limited to the eonian times. Beyond them might is not only unnecessary but hints at opposition such as will never mar that ultimate perfection.

"*Lo!* He is coming with clouds!" What an inspiration this will be to the sorely tried saints in the period which precedes that coming! Upon the same mount of Olives to which He will come, our Lord gave them a brief account of the very events which are detailed in this scroll (Mat. 24:3-31). "Immediately after

the affliction . . . the sign of the Son of Mankind shall be appearing in heaven, and then all the tribes of the land shall be grieving, and they shall be viewing the Son of Mankind coming on the clouds of heaven with power and much glory."

What a sight this will be to the nation which has rejected Him for so many centuries! When they see the marks of His passion, the spirit of grace and supplication will overwhelm them and they will mourn over the past and be in bitterness because of their rejection of Messiah. It will be national—all the tribes of the land will beat their breasts because of Him. Zechariah tells us that, in the day when Jehovah seeks to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem, the whole land shall mourn (Zech. 12:9-14).

Jehovah Elohim interposes at this place to add still other titles which are peculiarly in point in this prophecy. "I am the A and the Z" (or, as the Greek has it, the Alpha and the Omega, the first and last letters of the alphabet) connects this, the last scroll, with the earliest Hebrew Scriptures and all previous revelation. In the Greek the first letter, Alpha, is spelled in full, the last is a single character. Unless this suggests a lingering period of promise with a short, sharp fulfillment it is difficult to account for it.

This appellation is most apt in this connection, for now He proceeds to fulfill the promises given so long before. He will complete what He has started. He will accomplish what He has commenced. He is the Originator and Consummator of His own revelation just as He is the source and goal of the universe.

The introduction to the Prophetic Section has been reviewed. Every detail confirms us in the position that these ecclesias are composed of the sons of Israel. The title, Jehovah, the kingdom of priests, the grieving tribes—all appeals to them but has no point for us.

Today the sons of Israel are returning to the land where He will find a remnant at His return. Never before has there been such yearning in their hearts for Zion. While living in Tiberias, I listened for hours to the effusions of a Jewish heart, trying to explain the urge which leads a Jew to forsake friends and comforts and do his part in rebuilding their lost inheritance. There are the restrictions of the government to immigration, there is the hostility of the Arabs, but all of this cannot kill the longing that God has implanted in their breasts for the land of their fathers.

It is the privilege of His saints to intelligently and willingly coöperate in the fulfillment of God's will. It is no less sure that the unbeliever, though obstinate and ignorant, will carry out God's plans and purposes. So is Israel today. Moved by the unseen hand of Jehovah, they are preparing for the return of their Messiah even while they reject Him. Back to the land where once they lived their weary feet are hastening. The tragedy of this Unveiling has not, indeed, begun. But the scenery is being shifted, the properties are being set, so that even the climax of His coming will find the grieving tribes in the land where they crucified their Christ. One sight of Him and they are His.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 1:9-11

⁹I, John, your brother and joint participant in the affliction and kingdom and endurance in Jesus Christ, came to be in the island which is called Patmos, because of the word of God, and because of the testimony of Jesus Christ. ¹⁰I came to be, in spirit, in the Lord's day, and I hear behind me a voice, loud as a trumpet, ¹¹saying: "*What you are observing write in a scroll and send to the seven ecclesias: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.*"

THE PROPHETIC SECTION

PATMOS was the place where John wrote this scroll and beheld the visions recorded in it. Seldom, indeed, are we told where the scrolls of the Scriptures were written, but the place of a vision is usually deemed of importance. Ezekiel was by the river Chebar (1:3) and was transported, in spirit, to Jerusalem (8:3) and Chaldea (11:24), etc. Daniel was once in the palace at Shushan (8:2) though transported in spirit to the river Ulai. At another time he was beside the Hiddekel, or Tigris (10:4).

John saw and wrote the Prophetic section of this book at Patmos. When the throne section commences, however, the first sound which he hears calls him to heaven, where the introductory vision is located (4:1). Later he came away to eat the little scroll (10:9) and to measure the temple of God (11:1), yet seems to resume his place in heaven until the new heaven is created. He never enters there. In the last Prophetic section he seems to be back at Patmos as at the first. So that, for the purposes of interpretation, we are to consider John at Patmos only during the Prophetic sections.

What reason can be assigned for this location? Why was it not revealed to him in Jerusalem? Why not on the mainland, in the center of the ecclesias to whom he writes? There must be a peculiar fitness in this place, whether we are able to discover it or not.

Patmos is a small, rocky island in the Aegean archipelago, off the shores of the province of Asia. Anciently,

it was reckoned as one of the Sporades. In medieval times it was called Palmosa, but now Patmo.

The meaning of the name seems to be TREADING. The element *pat* occurs thrice in the verb *tread*. They will be *treading* the holy city (11:2). The wine trough will be *trodden* outside the city (14:20). The Rider on the white horse is *treading* the wine trough (19:15).

Do not all the circumstances suggest that John is sent to Patmos so that his physical environment may correspond to the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel at the time when the vision is fulfilled? What could be a better parable of their isolated, barren state, in the midst of, yet apart from the nations, with hearts at a distance from God, than this rocky islet, surrounded by the sea, far from the holy land and the sacred city?

The tradition that John was banished to the island and imprisoned there probably arose from the phrase "because of the word of God and because of the testimony of Jesus Christ". But it is far more probable that this scroll is the word of God and the testimony because of which he came to be in Patmos. He certainly had liberty to write, and was able to send his revelation to the saints.

Whatever value we may attach to the place of the Unveiling, the time element is of prime importance. The interpretation of the whole scroll, and especially of the messages to the ecclesias, depends on the right translation and true interpretation of the words, "I came to be, in spirit, in the Lord's day". At the risk of being prolix and redundant, we cannot pass it by without once more enforcing its true translation and interpretation.

The phrase "in the Spirit" should read, as the original shows, without the article, simply "in spirit". The same phrase occurs on three other occasions. These are safe and sure indexes of its meaning here. In each case the apostle is transported, in spirit, to a place or time which his body could not occupy. He thus ascended to heaven and beheld the magnificent throne scene (4:2).

He is carried away, in spirit, into a wilderness, to behold the woman on the scarlet wild beast (17:3). He is carried away, in spirit, to a mountain on the new earth to behold the holy city (21:10). In every case John is taken without reference to his body, and sees and hears what belongs to the far future. “In spirit” is opposed to “in flesh” (Rom. 8:9). The sense is that, as John could not be transported into the Lord’s day in flesh, his spirit was carried thither in a vision. There is no need to bring in the holy spirit of God as the agent or power *by* which this was done. We have already been told that all this was signified through his messenger (1:1). Messengers are the agents used in all the transactions of this book. One of the seven messengers who have the seven bowls carries John away, in spirit, to view the woman in the wilderness (17:3) and one of the same carries him away to view the new Jerusalem (21:10).

There is every reason to believe that the same is true here. The voice which he heard was doubtless the voice of the Messenger Who had carried him in spirit into the Lord’s day. In this case it can be no other than the Chief Messenger, our Lord Himself, for He partakes of the office of messenger, and is their Chief. He has been anointed with the oil of exultation beyond His partners (Heb. 1:9).

This solves a difficulty connected with that coming for His saints which occurs before the judgment scenes encountered in this scroll can occur. We are looking for Christ, not an angel, however exalted his rank may be. It is somewhat disconcerting, then, to be told that our Lord shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God . . .” (1 Thes. 4:16). If our Lord *Himself* is coming, why bring with Him an archangel? And who blows the trump of God? Are there three great Personages coming for us? Not so! He will not share this glory with another. He gives the shout of command *Himself* and *His* is the voice

of the Chief Messenger, and *He* uses the trumpet of God. He has many glories and not the least of these is His headship over the messengers of God. The phrase should stand, then, in its simplest and most consistent form, not “*by* the Spirit [of God]”, but *in* [John’s] spirit”.

This passage is but one example of the difficulties which confront a translator in regard to the capitalization of the word spirit. The capital S indicates the *opinion* of the translator that the holy spirit of God is intended. It is often difficult to determine whose spirit is in view and it is unwise for any version to so far usurp the function of interpretation as to decide each case. So the Concordant Version always puts the word spirit with a small initial s, and so leaves the matter open to each student to decide for himself.

It is evident, then, that the Messenger like a son of mankind transports John, in spirit, into the Lord’s day.

But it is objected that, if this were indeed the day of the Lord spoken of in the prophets, then the usual formula would have been used. Why should it be changed?

There are three points of difference between the phrases “THE DAY OF THE LORD” and “THE LORD’S DAY”.

All three conspire to shift the emphasis from “the day of the LORD” to “the Lord’s DAY”. They unite in turning our thoughts from the *character* of the day to the *time*, the *event*.

And is this not most apt? In the day of the LORD we are sure that man is abased and the Lord *alone* will be exalted. But when we learn that John has come to be, in spirit, in some “day”, we want to know *what day?* What *time?* As the thought of time is uppermost, the phrase “the day of the LORD” is modified and readjusted to perform its new duty. These differences, of course, are in the Greek and are but faintly reflected in the English.

The genitive case points back to the source and origin of things: it gives character. The dative case points us forward to the associations of place and time: it locates. "The day of the LORD" puts "Lord" in the genitive, telling us what *kind* of day it will be. "The Lord's DAY" puts "Lord's" in the dative, answering the question, *When?* It is in contrast to *man's* DAY, the time when man is having his fling.

The first difference, then, changes the direction of our thoughts. What characterized, now *locates*. John comes to be, in spirit, IN the Lord's DAY. The second difference lies in the *rank* of the words employed. "Lord" is a name, or noun: "Lord's is (or should be if it were possible in English) a descriptive term, or adjective. The Spirit very often changes an adjective into a noun in order to emphasize it. "Mighty men" are called "men of might". We almost forget that they are men in the thought of their *might*. This cannot always be reproduced in English. "Of the glory of the grace" (Eph. 1:6) is not easily followed by our modern minds. "The grace GLORIOUS" is easier to grasp. This is the law: The higher the rank, the greater the importance, the heavier the emphasis. So that, in "the Lord's DAY" we are compelled to reduce and soften the emphasis on the word "Lord's". Because it occurs before "day" instead of after it (as it ordinarily should be) it still retains some emphasis, which we have indicated by putting it in italics.

The second difference joins its voice with the first in bidding us pay attention to the DAY rather than to its Lord, as has been the custom.

The third difference is in the *order* of the words. If the whole sentence read:

I came to be, in spirit, in the day of the Lord,
instead of

I came to be, in spirit, in the Lord's day,

then the last word would be "LORD". As it stands the last word is "DAY". First things are important. So are things last. He is the First and the Last. In Gal. 2:20 the order of the words is "CHRIST together-with-have-I-been-crucified: yet I live; no longer I, but in me lives CHRIST". As has been remarked, "Christ is first and Christ is last and 'not I' fills in between". So here. By relieving "Lord" of its striking situation at the end of the sentence and giving DAY that prominent place, once more we are impressed with the fact that the Spirit is not using some stereotyped human expression, but is adapting His own powerful and flexible phrase "the day of the Lord" to its new and special duty of informing us that now, at last, the DAY itself has come!

It seems hardly necessary to add that all these changes do not affect the *sense* in the least. "Man's day" and "the day of man" are the same day. "Lot's wife" and "the wife of Lot" (as it is literally) are the same wife. "God's house" (Gen. 28:22) means just the same to us as "the house of God" (Gen. 28:17). "The Lord's people" (1 Sam. 2:24) are the same as the "people of the Lord" (Jud. 5:11). "Christ's gospel" (2 Cor. 2:12) and "Christ's sufferings" (1 Pet. 4:13) have never been taken for anything but "the gospel of Christ" and "the sufferings of Christ". In fact it is an axiom in Scripture that when God uses the same words He means the same things. The grammar, the rank of words and their order are exceedingly important, but they cannot introduce a radical change of sense.

So then, we conclude that while "the Lord's DAY" and "the day of the LORD" are *identical*, the Spirit has used the one which perfectly fits this context, so as to help rather than burden the even flow of thought; so as to give an agreeable and satisfactory answer to the question which absorbs us: *When?*

The Hebrew language has no adjective "Lord's".

“The Lord’s messenger” (Hag. 1:13) and “the messenger of the Lord” (Mal. 2:7) are two translations of the same Hebrew words. Likewise “the captain of the host of the Lord” (Josh. 5:14) and “the captain of the Lord’s host” (Josh 5:15) represent one and the same Hebrew expression. So that to translate the phrase “the Lord’s day” into Hebrew one is obliged to say “the day of the Lord”. Salkinson’s Hebrew New Testament translates it “the Day of the Lord” (*Yom haadon*). Some modern languages are, in this respect, like the Hebrew. French and Italian, for instance, have no adjective “Lord’s”, and the Greek of Un. 1:10 should have been translated “the day of the Lord”. The translators, however, have colored the text by the prevailing misconception, rendering the Lord’s Day by “*jour de Dimanche*” and “*giorno della Domenica*”. The Russian and Old Slavonic versions have “Sunday”, although both languages have the adjective “Lord’s”, and both translate the Hebrew *Yom Yehovah* “the Lord’s Day” and “the Day of the Lord”.

The first sensation which greeted John, in his new condition, was a loud voice. Loud as it was, we may well believe that he recognized the accents of his Lord. He was one of His sheep and all His sheep know His voice. What a thrill it must have given him to hear once more the voice that swayed the multitudes and stilled the surging waves, that calmly commanded the dead damsel to arise, and shouted to decaying Lazarus, “Come forth!” This is the voice that all that are in the graves shall hear, and Death will have no power to withstand its force. As it was with John, our first intimation of His blessed presence will be His voice. We have never heard Him, even as we have never seen Him, but we shall need no interpreter to tell us Whose voice it is! No other sound can have the transforming power of that voice! It will not only rouse the sleeping dead, but will give immortality to us, who are alive at His pres-

ence. We shall be changed and, like John, shall be caught up to meet Him. But, unlike John, it will not be in spirit only, but with bodies transfigured, glorified.

He is commanded to write the vision on a scroll and send it to the seven ecclesias. Much has been said about this simple command. In early times it caused a considerable prejudice against the whole scroll because, in at least one instance, there was no ecclesia in the city mentioned to which to send the message. But the real difficulty lies deeper. The succeeding letters are suitable only to ecclesias in the day of the Lord. Why send them to those for whom they were not intended? The whole matter becomes exceedingly simple if we remember that John is given this command when he himself was, in spirit, in the day of the Lord. Hence the vision and the seven epistles have *no* application to the past, and far less to the present. No one will question that, should such ecclesias be established in Asia Minor in the future, they would receive these epistles. This is the only satisfactory solution.

The "application" of these epistles to the present administration has been a powerful factor in the adulteration of the grace which is ours in Christ Jesus. We cannot follow John into the day of the Lord without our "falling from grace". These seven letters find their fulfillment on earth at a time when we shall find ourselves in the heavens.

The historical interpretation, which assigns each of these locations to a period of church history, is full of interesting coincidences. These depend upon the fact that the course of evil is similar at all times. But the general agreement is not nearly great enough to warrant an interpretation which has not a single hint to support it in the text. There is no suggestion that these ecclesias denote different eras, and the symbolism is against the thought that they appear upon the scene one after another. They are all seen at once. The order is not that

of time, hence we are not warranted in introducing this idea, no matter how attractive it may seem. Whatever may be the period in which these ecclesias find their place, they are contemporary as to time, unless we boldly step outside what is revealed. Such an image as the seven golden lampstands becomes incongruous if we start with one lamp, and increase the number, or take some away before all are in place. Such an action is not contained in the symbolism and should not be vital to the interpretation. The ecclesias are literal, and not successive epochs of church history. They belong in the era of God's indignation, and must not darken the present administration of most marvelous, unmingled grace.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 1:12-20

¹²And I turn about to look for the voice which talked with me. And, turning about, I perceived seven golden lampstands, ¹³and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like a son of mankind, dressed in a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about the breasts with a golden girdle. ¹⁴Now His head and hair are white as white wool—as snow, and His eyes are as a flame of fire; ¹⁵and His feet are like white bronze, as fired in a furnace; and His voice is as the sound of many waters. ¹⁶And He has in His right hand seven stars; and issuing out of His mouth is a sharp two-edged saber; and His countenance is as the sun appearing in its power.

¹⁷And when I perceived Him, I fall at His feet as dead. And He places His right hand on me, saying, "Fear not! *I* am the First and the Last, ¹⁸and the Living One: and I became dead, and *lo!* I am living for the eons of the eons. (*Amen!*) And I have the keys of death and of the unseen. ¹⁹Write, then, what you perceive, and what they are, and what is about to be occurring after these things: ²⁰the secret of the seven stars which you perceived on My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are messengers of the seven ecclesias, and the seven lampstands are seven ecclesias.

THE FIRST VISION

WHEN John turned, he beheld a vision of Israel's Mediator and Judge. The judgment of the Lord's day begins from the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17). Before the Lord commences His strange work among the peoples and sheathes His sword in the nations, He speaks to Israel with the saber that proceeds out of His mouth, and rebukes the people of the covenant.

This vision is not in heaven, as is usually assumed. It is true that the patterns of the tabernacle and temple furniture are in heaven, as we shall see in the later visions of this scroll. But if the seven "candlesticks" of this vision were the pattern for Moses when he had the lampstand of the tabernacle made, he was guilty of a very radical departure, for here there are seven single lampstands, while the tabernacle contained only one with seven branches. Moreover, before the next vision is given, John is told to *ascend* (4:1). We may conclude, then, that John, at this time, had not ascended, and that this vision is located on earth.

This conclusion will help us to set right another misconception as to the character of Christ as He appears in the midst of the lampstands. On earth He did not exercise the priestly office (Heb. 8:4). Nothing in the vision, when carefully considered, suggests the priesthood. The lampstands are not to be confused with the one in the temple, His vestments do not correspond with those which were made for Aaron and his sons, which did not reach to the ground. Even the girdle is not of linen (Ex. 39:29) but of gold.

Indeed there is much, very much, in this vision which stands in severe contrast to the priestly office. Priests are ordained for men in that which pertains to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin. They are moderate with the ignorant and those who are out of the way (Heb. 5:1-2). Where are there any signs of moderation in this picture? Eyes like a flame of fire, a mouth from which issues a sharp two-edged saber, do not speak of compassion but of judgment. A countenance like the sun is not comforting. And there is no provision for sacrifice. Sin is exposed and condemned, not expiated. No wonder John fell at His feet as dead! No wonder he needed to be reassured, "Fear not!" Truly, it was a fearful and dreadful sight, enough to cause dismay and death even to the disciple whom Jesus loved, who had reclined in His bosom with perfect confidence and trust. Priesthood is far removed from this vision.

There is a delightful reticence in the manner in which our Lord is referred to in this judgment scene. It is as though He would not be too closely associated with it. There is no doubt that it is the Son of Mankind Who walks among the lampstands. But both here and in Daniel (7:13) He is evasively termed "One like a son of mankind". His form was human, but how unlike that lowly frame and face, once marred and mangled, bruised and spat upon! How unlike He seems to the Son of Mankind Who came to seek and to save that which was lost! .

The dreadful splendor of this vision is concentrated in the figure of the Judge. The light of the lamps and the shining of the stars could contribute no radiance in the presence of that countenance which glowed like the sun. As in the judgment of the dead, after the thousand years, the majesty of the throne will consist in its whiteness, so the appalling figure of the Judge is re-

splendently white. Not only are the head and hair of purest white, but the feet, also, are a dazzling luminous whiteness, like bronze when it is heated in a furnace.

All this is portentous of the fiery judgment of Jehovah's day. Were such a Judge as this presiding over the destinies of the church today the awful apostasy and pollution in which we are plunged would not be endured for a moment. The reign of grace would give place to the instant execution of judgment. Let us thank our God that such scenes as this are not for us! He never will look at us with flaming eyes! He never will speak to us with a sabered tongue!

The various particulars of this vision are all adapted to the work of judging in the midst of the ecclesias. The desertion of Ephesus is met by reminding them that He has the stars and lamps in His power and will remove them unless they repent. He is able to cope with the uncleanness and deception in Thyatira because His flaming eyes ferret out all evil and His glowing feet burn against their immorality. He will battle with the Nicolaitans in Pergamos with the saber of His mouth.

It is of utmost consequence to grasp the character which Christ assumes in connection with each of His administrations. Everything here points to the office of Prophet. He appears as God's Spokesman to the people. The functions of the priest and the prophet are opposite in character. The priest brought the offerings of the people to God, but the prophet brought the word of God to the people. Moses is the type of the prophetic office which the Messiah of Israel was to fulfill. The Lord said to him, "A prophet will I raise up for them from among their brethren, as you, and I put My words in His mouth, and He speaks to them all that I shall direct Him. And it shall be that the man who will not hearken to My words, which He shall speak in My name, *I will inquire of him!*" (Deut. 18: 18, 19).

It was in this character that He was presented to Israel in the Pentecostal era (Acts 3:22; 7:37.) If this were apprehended no one would insist on transporting that stern judgment period into the present. That era was in close agreement with the seven epistles which follow this vision. Indeed, Peter shows clearly from Joel's prophecy that Pentecost was the precursor of the Apocalyptic judgments, for *afterward* were to follow the portents of His presence. At the close of the testimony to the city of Jerusalem, when Stephen was stoned, we find Him as the Son of Mankind, standing. In this vision He reappears, walking in the midst of the ecclesias.

We should never confound the glorious person of our Lord with His appearance as seen in visions. On the mount of transformation He was glorified, and even His garments became white and glistening. The same glory was revealed to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road, and it outshone the sun in its effulgence. It will be sufficient to illuminate the New Jerusalem.

Yet in visions, He sometimes lays aside this glory, as when He becomes a Lambkin in the next scene in this scroll. At all such times His appearance is official and symbolic, rather than personal. The whiteness of His head and hair, the terror of His eyes, the fiery feet, the booming voice, the two-edged saber—all these are assumed characteristics and dignities suited to the work in hand and the office of a judge. They are not His permanent personal glories. They indicate, as nothing else could do, the searching severity with which the ecclesias at the end time will be dealt with.

To further emphasize the character of the vision we are told of its effect on John. He fell at His feet as dead. How different it will be with us when we hear the trumpet and rise to life! We should not let this dread picture of the Judge dim our desire to meet Him

as our Saviour. There will be no need to say to us: "Fear not!" The glorious majesty will not be insufferable, for we will be transfigured ourselves and have a body like His glorious body. We will not fall. We will rise! No dread of Him will deliver us to death. His presence will be our life!

To comfort and strengthen John the Judge reminds him of those great truths which we should always bear in mind where we see Him executing judgment. Judgment is God's strange work. It is temporary and fleeting and intermediate. It is only part of the divine process. It has no permanent place in His purpose and is no part of the final result. Christ is the First and the Last. What He has inaugurated He will see completed. Moreover, He, too, has passed through the ordeal and is the Type and Pledge of the coming glory. He endured the judgment of death, but is now beyond it. More than this, He has the keys, and can deliver those whom judgment casts into the jaws of death and the unseen.

Being thus comforted and restored, John is once again charged to write. As this command is a key passage, and its mistranslation has been used as the foundation of a whole system of interpretation which applies the seven messages to the ecclesias to the present economy, we shall examine it with more than ordinary care.

THE THINGS WHICH ARE

The expression "the things which are" (1:19) and the interpretation of the second and third chapters of the Unveiling founded upon it, may be a stumbling block in the way of some and serve to keep them from appreciating and enjoying the light which is shed upon the whole book by the identification of "the Lord's day" with "the day of the Lord".

But in order to understand this scroll, we too, must

in spirit, accompany John and view all from *his* point of vantage, not the one we at present occupy. Is he transported to heaven, or to the wilderness? Then let us take our stand there also. Does he see a new heaven and a new earth? Then let us remember that the former things passed away (Un. 21:4), and not burden that blessed time with the failure of former ages. We should act as to *time* just as we should in regard to place. John *saw* these things and *heard* them.

And in this way, when we read of “the things which are”, we are to view them, not from the present, but from the view-point which John then occupied, that is, the Lord’s day.

This is sufficient to remove any difficulty which the phrase “the things which are” might present. But our purpose is not to remove objections merely, but to open up His Word.

As the usual version is entirely out of line with the context and quite contrary to the facts, we repeat the idiomatic rendering of the Concordant Version and the necessary data so that anyone can test the matter to his own satisfaction.

“I came to be, in spirit, in the Lord’s day, and I hear behind me a voice, loud as a trumpet, saying: “*What you are observing write in a scroll and send to the seven ecclesias.*” The apostle turns and perceives the vision of the Son of Mankind in magisterial majesty in the midst of the seven lampstands with the seven stars in His right hand. *After this vision* he is told, “Write, then, what you perceived, and what they are, and what is about to be occurring after these things: the secret of the seven stars which you perceived on My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are messengers of the seven ecclesias, and the seven lampstands are the seven ecclesias” (1:19, 20).

“Write, *then.*” This tells us that the second charge

which John received to write flows from the vision he had just seen. It is in consequence of having seen it that he is to take up his pen. The charge is divided into three separate items. He has already recorded what he had seen and we are about to be told what *one* things he had seen represent. This is done in the very next sentence where the stars and lampstands are explained. Then follow the seven letters detailing to each assembly the things which impend or what is in store for them *in consequence of this vision*.

The writer once held that the things which John had seen were *past* things, then followed "the things which are" *present* things (as described in the second and third chapters), and then "the things that shall be hereafter" (from chapter four onward to the end of the scroll). This division was so convenient and plausible that he was loath to leave it even when it became clear that a close study of the passage could not be forced to support it. But when God speaks it is useless to cling to anything not absolutely in harmony with His Word. A few of the reasons why this interpretation had to be abandoned may be helpful to others.

In the first place, we would naturally expect that the past, present and future tenses—what John *had* seen, which *are*, and *shall be*—would be found just so in the original. But in this we will be disappointed. The "shall be" is in the *present* tense, that is, things even then impending. And, moreover, the things which we supposed were exclusively in the past, as distinct from "the things which *are*", were continually present during this period. This is vital. The vision of the Son of Mankind did *not* pass away or become past in any sense. All through the seven letters we are continually reminded that the vision which John had seen was an abiding and awe-inspiring reality. *There is no such distinction as past and present possible in this passage.*

Were the point and purpose of the passage a contrast between present and past events, then we would expect the form of expression which the Spirit is accustomed to use in such cases. We would expect it to read “things *present*” (which, indeed is the gloss ordinarily suggested), as in Rom. 8:38; 1 Cor. 3:22, etc. This is the confessed understanding of the commentators, but, as the Author has avoided His own formula in this case, such a meaning cannot be forced into it.

Were it the Spirit’s intention to draw our attention to “the things which *are*” (i. e., *exist*), in contrast to the things which are not, then we would expect the same phrase as is used in 1 Cor. 1:28, where we have such a distinction.

But we have, instead, a relative pronoun, *a form whose special office is to connect the statement with what has previously been said*. It links the “are” or “represents” with the previous vision, and cannot be divorced from it without a serious infringement of the laws that govern all language.

Considerations concerning Greek idiom will lead us to change “the things that are” to “*what they are*” or, “what they represent”. The verb *to be* is sometimes rendered in our versions by other words, and an examination of such passages justifies the translators in so doing. The following are some examples:

“But if ye had known what this *meaneth*, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless” (Mat. 12:7).

“And there came a poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which *make* a farthing” (Mark 12:42).

“And he called to him one of the servants, and inquired what these things might *mean*” (Luke 15:26).

“And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What *meaneth* this?” (Acts 2:12).

“Now while Peter was much perplexed in himself

what the vision which he has seen might *mean*” (Acts 10:17).

“Which things *contain* an allegory” (Gal. 4:24).

The statement is not to the effect that the two women and their sons are purely imaginary or mythical personages, but that the actual happenings referred to possess an allegorical signification.

The words “are” and “is” are frequently employed in explaining symbols, and in such instances they are equivalent to *signify* or *represent*, as will be seen from the following examples:

“And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is (i. e., *means* or *signifies*), being interpreted, God with us” (Mat. 1:23).

“He that soweth the good seed is (*represents*) the Son of Man” (Mat. 13:37).

“The field is (*represents*) the world” (Mat. 13:38).

“The enemy that soweth them is (*represents*) the devil; and the harvest is (*represents*) the end of the age” (Mat. 13:39).

“Now the parable is (*represents* or *sets forth*) this . . .” (Luke 8:11).

“Now this Hagar is (*represents*) Mount Sinai.” (Gal. 4:25). It hardly needs to be said that Hagar is *not* Mount Sinai; but merely *represents* the covenant of law there made with Israel, which brought them into bondage.

It will help us to take a number of similar examples from the scroll we are considering:

“And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are (*represent*) the seven spirits of God” (Un. 4:5; 5:6).

“Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are (*represent*) seven mountains where the woman is sitting on them, and they are (*represent*) seven kings . . .” (Un. 17:9).

“And the ten horns which you perceived are (*represent*) ten kings—those who obtained no kingdom as yet” (Un. 17:12).

“And he is saying to me, ‘These waters which you perceived, where the prostitute is sitting, are (*represent*) people and throngs and nations and languages’” (Un. 17:15).

“And the woman whom you perceived is (*represents*) the great city which has a kingdom over the kings of the earth” (Un. 17:18).

It is indisputable that in these places the real force of the word “are” is to *represent* or *signify*. Lamps are *not* spirits, mountains are *not* kings, and cities are *not* women, but in these visions lamps and mountains and women are emblems of spirits, and kings and cities. And that this is the true rendering is placed beyond any doubt, *because that is exactly what John proceeds to do*. After he has described the vision he immediately goes on to say: “The seven stars are (or *represent*, exactly the same word rendered “are” above) messengers of the seven ecclesias, and the seven lampstands are (or *represent*) the seven ecclesias.”

But what things impend? What is about to happen *within the range of the vision John had seen*? The word “then” connects the charge to write so vitally with the vision itself that we are not at liberty to allow our thoughts to stray beyond its boundaries. What connection is there between the judgments following the fourth chapter and the vision of the Son of Mankind *in the midst of the lampstands*? None! Those judgments are preceded by and based upon entirely different visions, in which the Lord is seen in totally different environments and relationships.

We must confine the things that impend to those things which were about to befall the assemblies. This is the burden of the seven letters. If Ephesus did not

repent and do the first works there was danger of its being removed out of its place. Ten days tribulation hung over the Smyrnan assembly, and so they are encouraged. The Lord Himself threatened to fight with Pergamos. He was about to come as a thief to Sardis. He cannot come thus to us (1 Thes. 5:4). Philadelphia is assured of being kept *out* of the hour of trial which was about to come upon all the world. The Laodiceans were to be spewed out of His mouth. Here we have John's record of "what is about to be occurring after these things".

Another consideration leads to the same result. In the very same sentence, as an explanation of what had just been said, it is added: ". . . the secret of the seven stars which you perceived on my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands". Were this an *added* thought then the word "*and*" would have connected it with the previous words. But as it stands it is in apposition, that is, the same thought expressed in different words. The explanation of the stars and lampstands and His words "to the seven ecclesias", is the secret here spoken of. Thus we find that John, in fulfilling the charge to write, explains first *what* the things he had seen represent and then details the events about to befall each separate assembly, and in no wise goes beyond the pale of the vision in doing so. He had previously been given a general charge to write what he should see before he had turned about to view the vision, but this second charge is in the very midst of the vision itself and its explanation. To say the least this would be a strange place to introduce a general analysis of the whole range of the Unveiling, and the faintest suspicion of such a thing is dispelled by its introductory connective "then", which shows that the charge is exclusively concerned with the vision, its meaning and its consequences.

Instead, therefore, of clashing with the previous

statement that John was in the Lord's day, it is in closest harmony therewith.

At the present time we are enjoying "the stewardship of God's *grace*" (Eph. 3:2). But Peter tells us that the time has come that *judgment* must *begin* from the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17). This, however, can only refer to that "holy *nation*" (1 Pet. 2:9) to whom the Hebrew letter was sent (Heb. 3:6, omit "own"; it is God's house). Peter also refers us to Noah and Lot as a sample of what the Lord was about to do (2 Pet. 2:5-7). Our Lord tells us that the days of Noah and the days of Lot are pictures of what it will be in the *days of the Son of Mankind* (Luke 17:26-28). This vision of Him in the midst of the lampstands brings before us these very days. But they *cannot, must not*, be suffered to dim the glories of God's present dispensation of unmixed, undiluted and matchless grace.

It remains only to add that the literary form of these epistles is an echo of the opening denunciatory address in Amos, in which Israel and Judah are presented as among the Seven Doomed Nations: particular addresses of doom are made to each of the seven peoples, these being bound together by recurrent (though varied in detail) *formulae* of doom. Likewise in this Unveiling the charges to the particular churches are independent; but these are enclosed between recurrent formulae at opening and close of each, the formulae varied in detail for each church. The opening formula describes the Divine Speaker, the close is made up of promises and a cry of emphasis. The symbolism of the formulae is largely, but not entirely, an anticipation of the coming revelation.

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CHAPTER 2:1-3:22

2 To the messenger of the ecclesia in Ephesus write: 'Now this He is saying Who is holding the seven stars in His right hand. Who is walking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands.

2"I am aware of your acts, and your toil, and your endurance, and that you cannot bear evil, and you try those saying that they themselves are apostles, and are not, and you found them false, 3 and you have endurance, and you bear because of My name, and are not wearied. 4 But I have against you that you desert your first love. 5 Be remembering, then, whence you have fallen, and repent, and do the former acts. Otherwise, I am coming to you, and shall be moving your lampstand out of its place, if you should not be repenting. 6 But this you have, that you are hating the acts of the Nicolaitans, which I, also, am hating.

7 Who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit is saying to the ecclesias.

To the one who is conquering, to him shall I be granting to be eating of the tree of life, which is in the center of the paradise of God."

8 And to the messenger of the ecclesia in Smyrna write: 'Now this He is saying, Who is the First and the Last, Who became dead, and lives.

9 "I am aware of your acts and affliction and poverty (but you are rich) and the calumny of those professing themselves to be Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Be fearing naught of what you are about to be suffering. Lo! the Slanderer is about to be casting some of you into jail that you may be tried, and you will be having affliction ten days. Become faithful until death, and I shall be giving you the wreath of life.

11 Who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit is saying to the ecclesias.

The one who is conquering may under no circumstances be injured by the second death."

12 And to the messenger of the ecclesia in Pergamos write: 'Now this He is saying Who has the sharp two-edged saber.

13 "I am aware where you are dwelling — where Satan's throne is — and you are holding My name, and do not disown My faith in the days in which Antipas, My faithful witness, was killed among you, where Satan is dwelling. 14 But I have a few things against you, that you have there those holding the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a snare in sight of the sons of Israel, to be eating idol sacrifices, and to

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commit prostitution. ¹⁵ Thus *you*, also, have those holding the teaching of the Nicolaitans, likewise. ¹⁶ Repent then! Otherwise, I am coming to you swiftly and shall be battling with them with the saber of My mouth.

¹⁷ Who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit is saying to the ecclesias.

To the one who is conquering, to him shall I be giving of the hidden manna, and I shall be giving him a white pebble and on the pebble a new name written, which no one is aware of except the one who is obtaining it.”

¹⁸ And to the messenger of the ecclesia in Thyatira write: ‘Now this the Son of God is saying, Who has His eyes as a flame of fire, and Whose feet are like white bronze.

¹⁹ “I am aware of your acts and love and faith and service and your endurance; and your last acts are more than the former. ²⁰ But I have much against you, seeing that you pardon that woman of yours, Jezebel, professing herself to be a prophetess, and she is teaching and enticing My slaves to commit prostitution and to be eating idol sacrifices. ²¹ And I give her time that she may be repenting, and she is not willing to repent of her prostitution. ²² Lo! I will be casting her into a couch, and those committing adultery with her into great affliction, if they should not be repenting of her acts. ²³ And I shall be killing her children with the plague, and all the ecclesias will know that *I* am He Who is searching the kidneys and hearts. And I shall be giving to each of you in accord with your acts. ²⁴ Now to you I am saying—to the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, those who do not know ‘the depths of Satan,’ as they are saying—I will be casting on you no other burden. ²⁵ Moreover, hold what you have until I should be arriving.

²⁶ And the one who is conquering and keeping My acts until the consummation, to him shall I be giving authority, over the nations; ²⁷ and he shall be shepherding them with an iron club, as vessels of pottery are being crushed, as *I* also have obtained from My Father. ²⁸ And I shall be giving him the morning star.

²⁹ Who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit is saying to the ecclesias.”

3 And to the messenger of the ecclesia in Sardis write: ‘Now this He is saying Who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

“I am aware of your acts, that you have a name that you are living and are dead. ² Become watchful, and establish the rest who were about to be dying; for I have not found your acts complete in the sight of My God. ³ Be remembering, then, how you have obtained, and hear, and be keeping and repent.

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If ever then, you should not be watching, I shall be arriving on you as a thief, and under no circumstances will you be knowing at what hour I shall be arriving on you. ⁴ But you have a few names in Sardis which do not pollute their garments, and they shall walk with Me in white, seeing that they are worthy.

⁵ The one who is conquering, *he* shall be clothed in white garments, and under no circumstances shall I be erasing his name from the scroll of life, and I shall be avowing his name in front of My Father and in sight of His messengers.

⁶ Who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit is saying to the ecclesias." "

⁷ And to the messenger of the ecclesia in Philadelphia write: 'Now this is saying the True, the Holy One, Who has the key of David, Who is opening and no one shall be locking, and locking and no one shall be opening.

⁸ "I am aware of your acts. *Lo!* In your sight have I granted an open door which no one is able to lock, seeing that you have a little power, and you keep My word and you do not disown My name. ⁹ *Lo!* I have granted to those of the synagogue of Satan, (who are professing themselves to be Jews and are not, but are lying)—*Lo!* I shall be making them that they will be arriving and worshiping in sight of your feet, and they may know that *I* love you. ¹⁰ Seeing that you keep the word of My endurance, *I* also shall be keeping you out of the hour of trial which is about to be coming on the whole inhabited earth to try those who are dwelling on the earth. ¹¹ I am coming swiftly! Be holding to that which you have, that no one may be taking your wreath.

¹² The one who is conquering, him shall I be making a pillar in the temple of My God, and he may be coming out nevermore, and I shall be writing on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which is descending out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

¹³ Who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit is saying to the ecclesias." "

¹⁴ And to the messenger of the ecclesia in Laodicea write: 'Now this He is saying Who is the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, and God's creative Original.

¹⁵ "I am aware of your acts, that you are neither cool nor zealous. You ought to be cool or zealous! ¹⁶ Thus, seeing that you are indifferent, and are neither cool nor zealous, I am about to spew you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ Seeing that you are saying that 'I am rich!' and 'I have become rich, and have need of nothing!' and you are not aware that *you* are wretched and forlorn and poor and blind and naked, ¹⁸ I am advising you to buy of Me gold refined in the fire that you should be rich,

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and white garments that you should be clothed, and the shame of your nakedness should not be made manifest, and eyesalve to anoint your eyes, that you may be observing.

¹⁹As many as *I* should be fond of, *I* am exposing and disciplining. Be zealous, then, and repent! ²⁰*Lo!* *I* stand at the door and am knocking. If ever anyone should be hearing *My* voice and be opening the door, *I* shall also be coming in to him and dining with him, and he with *Me*.

²¹The one who is conquering, to him shall *I* be granting to be seated with *Me* on *My* throne as *I* also conquer, and am seated with *My* father on *His* throne.

²²Who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit is saying to the ecclesias."'

CHAPTER 22:6-17

⁶And He said to me, "These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, commissions His messenger to show to His slaves what must occur swiftly. ⁷And *lo!* *I* am coming swiftly! Happy is he who is keeping the sayings of the prophecy of this scroll."

⁸And *I*, John, am the hearer and observer of these things. And when *I* hear and observe, *I* fall to worship in front of the feet of the messenger who is showing me these things. ⁹And he is saying to me: "See! No! *I* am a fellowslave of yours and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who are keeping the sayings of this scroll: worship God!" ¹⁰And he is saying to me, "You should not be sealing the sayings of the prophecy of this scroll, for the era is near. ¹¹Let him who is injuring, injure still; and let the filthy be filthy still; and let the just do righteousness still; and let the holy be hallowed still."

¹²"*Lo!* *I* am coming swiftly, and *My* wage is with *Me*, to pay each one as his work is. ¹³*I* am the A and the Z, the First and the Last, the Origin and the Consummation. ¹⁴Happy are those who are rinsing their robes, in order that it will be their license to the tree of life, and they may be entering the portals into the city. ¹⁵Outside are curs, and enchanters, and paramours, and murderers, and idolaters, and everyone fondling and fabricating falsehood.

¹⁶*I*, Jesus, send *My* messenger to testify these things to you in the ecclesias. *I* am the Root and the race of David, the resplendent Morning Star. ¹⁷And the spirit and the bride are saying, '*Come!*' And let him who is hearing say '*Come!*'. And let him who is thirsting be coming. Let him who is wanting it take the water of life gratuitously.

THE SEVEN ECCLESIAS

THE darkest hour of earth's history leaves the people of God without a light to guide them if we take the seven epistles to ourselves, as well as those of James and Peter and John and Jude. How can the era of judgment use the doctrines of grace? And how can we find anything for us in the stern demands and threats which characterize God's dealing with His earthly people in preparation for the millennial reign of righteousness?

No lengthy interpretation of these seven epistles is necessary once we grasp their true place in the crisis which comes at the end of this eon. Like gems they fit in their settings. Difficulties not only disappear, but are turned into helps.

Ephesus is the only place in these epistles which seems to connect us with Paul's ministry. While the words "to Ephesus" were not in the original draft of Ephesians as prepared by Paul, it seems certain that the letter was sent to Ephesus as well as to other places. Paul had spent a long time in that city. The question arises, if the doctrine here set forth is so much below the level of his teaching, how could this letter have been sent to them? The answer is simple. It is sent to Ephesus, not as it was in the days of the apostles, but as it will be in the Lord's day. *Then* this epistle will have its true application. The One like a son of mankind does not walk in the midst of the lampstands now with a sharp two-edged saber issuing from His mouth.

The highest reward to the overcomer falls far short of the lowest place in the present grace. Only those who repent, and return to their first love and do the former acts may eat of the tree of life which is in the center of the paradise of God. This paradise will be on the earth. Every believer today, no matter what his conduct may be, is blessed with every spiritual blessedness in Christ. His faithfulness and sufferings may be rewarded with still higher dignities and glories than this, but he will never descend to the highest award offered to the conqueror in Ephesus.

On the other hand, what a delightful prospect for one who lives amidst the judgments of those days! Though offering no attraction to us, a place in paradise will be a rare inducement to one who is striving to stem the tide of evil in the day of God's indignation.

Those who have adhered to the historical fulfillment of these epistles have had much ado to account for the Nicolaitans. History knows nothing of any such cult. The attempt to connect them with Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch, one of the seven deacons appointed by the apostles (Acts 6:5), is without any foundation in fact. This is the only body of people definitely named. The history of the church abounds with the names of heretical sects, not one of which bore this appellation. The conclusion is obvious. No such cult has yet existed.

The Nicolaitans are referred to only twice (Un. 2: 6,15). First the Ephesians hate their *acts*. Some in Pergamos hold their *teaching*. On the principle that these churches represent stages in the church's history, this sect existed from the beginning until the Reformation, and should have been very prominent. It has been applied to the clergy, but we fear the clergy did not disappear at the Reformation. They are still with us.

The name, as shown in the sublinear of the Concord-

ant Version, is composed of two words, CONQUER-PEOPLE. It seems to refer to some conqueror. If we can find out who this conqueror is, we shall soon see who the Nicolaitans are.

There are many conquerors in the Unveiling, but only one who is hateful to God. At the opening of the first seal a victor's wreath is given to the rider on the white horse and he came forth conquering and that he should conquer (Un. 6:2). His presence is followed by war and famine and pestilence. He is the false Messiah. In the next section of this scroll he appears as a wild beast. Of him it is written: "And to it was given to do battle with the saints *and to conquer them.*" (Un. 13:7). Here is the Nicholas, or conqueror of the people, whose adherents are the Nicolaitans. He it is who will *conquer* the two witnesses (Un. 11:7). He it is who scatters the power of the holy people (Dan. 12:7).

His conquest of the two witnesses carries him to the zenith of earthly power, especially in the sight of Israel. The witnesses were able to hold their own against all who came against them. Fire devoured all who would injure them. Their testimony was upheld by superhuman power, yet the wild beast is able to conquer them. No wonder they cry "Who is like the wild beast?" "Who is able to battle with it?" No wonder that the whole earth marvels after the wild beast (Un. 13:3-4).

How can we miss the evident conclusion: The Nicolaitans are the Israelitish worshipers of the wild beast. They are the Herodians of the end time. Hence they are hated by the Lord and those who are true to Him.

The doctrine of the Nicolaitans is associated with the teaching of Balaam (Num. 25). While *we* may eat things sacrificed to idols, so long as it is not offending the conscience of others, it will be a sign of apostasy when the wild beast sets up his image. Hence it is punishable with death (Un. 2:16). The worship of

the image and its accompanying lewdness is the height of apostasy and of this the Nicolaitans are guilty. Their end is seen when the true Conqueror comes on His white horse (19:11) when the votaries of the wild beast are killed by the saber which comes out of His mouth (19:21).

In Smyrna the victor receives the wreath of life. The "crown" here spoken of is not the regal crown denoting rule. It is the award of effort, the prize offered to those who can win it. Do we get life thus? The *gracious gift* of God is eonian life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23). We will never wear a wreath of life, for we do nothing to win it. We may win a wreath of *righteousness* (2 Tim. 4:8), even though we may not be famed for our just conduct toward our fellow man. Real righteousness today consists in love for the advent of Christ.

Our life is hid together with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). What appeal, then, can there be to us in the promise to the conqueror in Smyrna? He will not be injured by the second death. Neither will we, whether we are faithful or not.

Though such a reward cannot help us, it will be full of encouragement in the days to come to those who stare death in the face at every turn. Many, no doubt, will be faithful, and die the first death, and thus find immunity from the second death by their martyrdom.

The ten days of affliction has been variously interpreted. Some say it refers to ten separate persecutions, some to ten years of oppression. History knows nothing of ten days which are so marked as to call for such special mention.

If, however, we refer this to the future, at the time of the fifth seal (6:9) all need for mutilating the text is gone. By faith we understand that the pogrom under the fifth seal will last ten days.

The Lord's attitude in Pergamos is impossible in this era of grace. No saber issues from His mouth. He does not battle with His own.

The awards to the victors—the manna and the pebble—have no point for us. No literal manna falls, and the figurative manna—spiritual food—is free for all. The pebble, signifying an allotment in the kingdom, would be no reward for us, for we could make no use of it unless we desert our higher heavenly heritage.

In Israel, however, in the days which are swiftly coming, it will be an unspeakable boon to be sustained by manna through the time of trial and find an allotment in the land in the millennial kingdom. It is a reward worthy of their most earnest effort.

Antipas (2:13) needless to say, has not yet appeared.

We shall rule messengers in the celestial realms; Israel will rule the nations in the day of Jehovah. The voice of prophecy is clear on this point and is acknowledged by many who "take" these seven epistles for the church. The conquerors in Thyatira must certainly be Israelites, for they are given authority over the nations, and they shepherd them with an iron club.

The Lord's coming to the unwatchful ones in Sardis will be as a thief (3:3). We, however, are not in darkness that that day should overtake us as a thief (1 Thes. 5:4). But, you say, suppose we should not watch? "God did not appoint us to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, the One dying for us, that *whether we may be watching or drowsing*, we should be living at the same time together with Him" (1 Thes. 5:9-10).

No amount of unfaithfulness will take from us the life we have in Christ. Paul speaks of certain ones "whose names are in the scroll of life" (Phil. 4:3), in such a way as to suggest that this applies only to a class. It is evident that some of his helpers were of the Cir-

cumcision (Col. 4:11). And the use of the phrase elsewhere makes it evident that it applies only to those whose life is contingent on their behaviour, hence their names may be erased. Such a thought is absolutely impossible for those in grace. We have already a greater security than comes to the conqueror in Sardis.

The prize of the Philadelphian conquerors is as earthly as any of the rest. A place of honor in the millennial temple and the New Jerusalem cannot be coveted by any who have learned their high calling in Christ.

Who, in these days, profess to be Jews, and are not? When have they worshiped before the feet of true Jews?

Only the Laodicean promise has some likeness to present truth. Those who conquer will reign with Him. But now it is those who *endure* who will reign with Him (2 Tim. 2:12).

Is it not remarkable that the highest reward, that of reigning with Christ, is the only one which is not lower than what we possess by faith, apart from faithfulness? Yet it is evident that the throne here mentioned is the earthly throne which He occupies as the Son of Mankind. Our rule will be universal, and in the celestial realms.

The fact that there are *seven* epistles doubtless is significant, especially as each one ends with the injunction, in the plural, to hear what the spirit is saying to the *ecclesias*. Just as Paul's nine epistles to seven *ecclesias* are intended to be read by all, so these letters, though addressed to individual *ecclesias* with reference to their special condition, are intended for them all and will be read by all. They are a marvelous picture of Israel's condition at the time of the end.

The messages to the seven *ecclesias*, together with chapter 22:6-17, constitute the closing prophetic ministry to Israel. They belong with the prophetic scrolls of the Hebrew Scriptures, along with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Eze-

kiel and the minor prophets. Is it not most fitting that He Whose spirit spoke in the prophets of old, should Himself consummate their ministry when the time of fulfillment is near at hand? Let us remember that a prophet was not the normal means of communication with God. There is no provision for the office in the law. There are no prophets in the millennium. There will be none in the new earth. Only when priests are apostate and where kings are corrupt do we find God calling a spokesman to announce His Word to the people. At the time of the end Israel will be far from God. No king will rule them in God's fear. No priest will instruct them in God's ways. In their deepest defection and extremity, the Anointed Himself takes up the rôle of Prophet and adds this glory to His many honors.

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CHAPTER 4:1-3

4 After these things I perceived, and *lo!* a door has been opened in heaven, and *lo!* the first sound which I hear, is as of a trumpet talking with me, saying, "Ascend here! and I shall be showing you what must be occurring after these things".

² Now immediately I came to be in spirit, and *lo!* a throne located in heaven, and on the throne One sitting. ³And He Who is sitting is, to sight, like a jasper stone and a carnelian. And a rainbow surrounding the throne is, to sight, like an emerald.

THE THRONE

THE THRONE SECTION of this scroll, which we now enter, fills the next eight chapters and comprises the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Thunders, each of which has an introductory vision. As the Trumpets are but an expansion of the seventh Seal, the breaking of the Seals is the dominant thought throughout this section. The first vision not only introduces the Seals but serves as a key to all that follows. One of the secrets of getting a clear understanding of this prophecy lies in viewing each subject in the light of its introductory vision. All the characters and events up to the Temple Section—the Seals, the 144,000, the vast throng, the Trumpets, the locusts of the abyss, the terrible cavalry, the Thunders and the two witnesses—all these must be viewed in the light of the opening vision of the Throne.

The preliminary vision is itself divided into two parts, the first of which is concerned with *creation* (4: 1-11), and the second with *redemption* (5: 1-14).

When creation is in view we are occupied with the throne, the elders, and the four animals. When redemption comes before us we are engaged with the Enthroned One, the sealed scroll and the Lambkin. Thus the judgment proceeds upon two distinct lines which are, however, blended in its execution. He acts as the Creator toward His rebellious creatures, and He rights His people's wrongs as their Redeemer.

It will be of immense value to us in our study of this unveiling if we view each detail in the light of its immediate context. The fact that the elders and the four animals are introduced to us in the section on *creation* should have effectually prevented most of the interpretations which have been put forth concerning them. The introduction of the sealed scroll in the section on *redemption* should have been sufficient to indicate what it signifies. We shall devote a full chapter to each of these themes, but confine ourselves at present to the general features which first occupy the attention of the seer.

The throne section of the Unveiling solves the subject of supremest interest in the world today. It is the political redemption of the earth. The world has become an armed camp. The sittings of peace conferences are disturbed by the din of drums and the building of battleships. More than nine-tenths of the cost of government is wasted in war or in preparations for war. The world is weary of war, but every effort to prevent it seems doomed to failure. Once we were told that the Hague tribunal would avert all further strife. We know better now. Then, after the most awful clash of arms the world has ever seen, the nations hailed the League of Nations as the saviour of mankind. But the very nation which proposed and fathered the scheme turned against it ere it was consummated and now proposes a different plan to keep the world's peace.

How futile are all man's efforts! The cry is, "Peace! Peace!" when peace is apparent nowhere. Even in the nations not at war there is constant internal strife, often leading to bloodshed. And all are busy preparing for war which, they say, will never come.

Those who know the page of prophecy are well aware that the time of the end is an era of wars and rumors

of wars. Nation will rise against nation, the East will be pitted against the West, and there will be no peace until the false respite under the false messiah.

Mankind is striving for good government. Monarchies are being turned into republics, despotisms into soviets, and vice versa, democracies into kingdoms. There is a world-wide delusion that, if government could only be given into the hands of the people, all would be well. Democracy was the slogan of the world war. But we know that, in the reaction from democracy, the world will yet welcome the most absolute despot and dictator it has ever had. The political redemption of the earth cannot be accomplished by man. His methods are all foredoomed to failure. He has not the power to accomplish such a tremendous task.

But we know that there will be peace. We are sure that the world will yet enjoy a righteous rule. How will it be brought about? By uplifting humanity? By education? By the gradual influence of religion? Nothing of the kind. It will be ushered in by *force, unstinted force*. From above the artillery of heaven will be trained upon rebellious man, from beneath the infernal cavalry will take a terrible toll of human lives, the thunders of God's wrath will exhaust themselves upon the race.

No peace conference ushers in the long delayed millennium. Its approach is heralded by the breaking of seals, the blowing of trumpets and the clapping of thunder.

Such is the import of the section we are about to enter. It is concerned with the government of mankind. At its close the world kingdom becomes our Lord's and His Christ's (11:15).

The first thing John sees is a door which has been opened in heaven. This is most suggestive. At the present time the door is shut. There is no public connection

between heaven and earth. God does not interfere directly in the world's affairs. He overrules rather than rules. The reason for this is apparent. He could not maintain His present attitude of peace if He should deal with mankind as they deserve. Hence God's government is hidden. Its public manifestation waits until man's day is done and the day of Jehovah is due.

It is probable that the quaint, but crude, traditions concerning heaven have their rise from this vision. As there was a door, it was, not unnaturally, taken to be an enclosed space, having a definite location, concerning which there is a great deal of speculation. Some would have it in the center of the visible universe. Others suppose that it is beyond the range of the strongest telescope. All seem agreed that it is very far away and that the visible stellar world is not included in it.

But is it wise to take a vision as literally as that? There is One in this vision with Whom we are closely acquainted. He appears as a Lambkin. No one takes this literally. The invisible God appears in visible form as the Enthroned One. This cannot be literal. In these cases the apostle's eye meets characterizations of the official roles assumed by God and Christ, rather than actualities. This should assure us that this vision, like all visions, is not a record of fact, but a representation of truth. Communication between heaven and earth has ceased. Heaven is virtually closed to earth. This is suggested by the opened door, for communication is about to be resumed.

The true idea of the heavens should be gathered from the whole range of revelation. Its opening statement divides the universe into two parts, the heavens and the earth. Hence all beyond the confines of the earth is heaven. The very air above our heads is referred to, time and again, as heaven, for the oft repeated

phrase "fowls of the air" (Gen. 1:30), is, literally, the birds of the *heavens*. The dew comes from heaven (Gen. 27:28). Weather signs are in heaven (Luke 12:54-56). The clouds are in heaven (Mat. 24:30).

But heaven is not confined to the immediate vicinity of earth. It includes all stellar space. Heaven is not somewhere among or beyond the stars. The stars are *in* heaven. The sun and moon, and all celestial luminaries are embraced in the vast sweep of this comprehensive term. It includes all of creation above or beyond the earth.

The Hebrew word for heavens probably signifies PLACERS. The Greek word is very suggestive. It is composed of two elements which may be rendered SEE-UP. Whatever we see, when looking up, is heaven.

Heaven, then, is not some small, confined, invisible location either at the center or beyond the bounds of the visible universe, but it is the universe, excluding the earth.

This is of special moment to the body of Christ. All our blessings are among the celestials. The sphere of our activities will not be confined to some choice location, but will be unbounded, stretching beyond the limits of our present comprehension. We will reign, not in some well defined capital of the universe, but throughout the starry fields of space.

The opening of heaven's door is not only in contrast to the present, when there is no communication between God's throne and mankind, but is the prelude to the time when heaven itself will be opened and the White Horse Rider comes forth with the celestial hosts. The partial communication between heaven and earth suggested by the opened door leads to providential judgments. When heaven is opened Christ appears and deals out justice openly and publicly. As a result the mil-

lennial eon will differ greatly from the present, not only because of earthly conditions, but because of its close connection with heaven. It will be the kingdom of the heavens.

The natural tendency to see something symbolic in this scroll has made a great deal of John's ascent into heaven. Those who study the Scriptures as though they were a puzzle picture in which the church is everywhere skillfully concealed, see in his ascent a type of the rapture of the church. But this seems to be one of those common cases in which one error suggests another. If the second and third chapters give a history of the church, it is evident that the church does go through the tribulation. Those who know that this cannot be are at a loss to account for the fact that the "rapture" of the church is nowhere mentioned, and seize eagerly on John as a type of those who are caught up to meet Him in the air.

But how can John, an apostle of the Circumcision, figure the ecclesia which is Christ's body? John is a type, a spiritual representation, of those who tarry till the Lord comes (John 21:22) to His people Israel, but it will not do to single out one of his acts as symbolic of that in which he has no share. At the time of this vision the church has left the earth and seems to have no apparent part in the dispensation of earth's judgment which this scroll records. Its activities are among the celestials. It dispenses grace, not wrath.

After John is called, and comes to be in spirit, his gaze is greeted by one of the grandest and most august visions recorded in Holy Writ. The central and dominating object is a THRONE. Nothing is said of the appearance of this seat of Sovereign Majesty, so that we will be wise not to add any imaginary details. It is symbolic of government and dominion. It may, indeed, refer to

the same throne and the same time of which Daniel the prophet speaks, "I come to perceive till that thrones are set, and the Transferrer of Days is sitting . . . His throne as a flaring flame" (Dan. 7:9). The throne seen by Ezekiel was like sapphire or lapis lazuli (Eze. 1:26).

On the throne was One sitting. Here we have one of the few representations of the divine Majesty outside of Christ. As the deity is invisible spirit, no man has seen nor can see the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even the Father can be seen only in Him (Jn. 14:8-10). Only in visions are we granted any symbols of the divine presence. It is manifest from this how inadequate and lame our theological language is when we are continually speaking of "God the Father" as the one expression of the divine character which serves to distinguish Him from His Anointed. As the Lambkin appears in this vision also, it is usual to refer to the Enthroned One as "God the *Father*". But the symbols used do not give us the least suggestion of fatherhood. Indeed, nothing could be further removed from the affection and solicitude of a father than the awful Enthroned One. Rather are we reminded of the terrible scenes associated with the giving of the law, when Sinai burned with fire. Here we have the visible token of the truth that "Our God is a consuming fire" (Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29).

The jasper is a purple gem. Carnelian is red like a ruby. The combination gives us the lurid brilliance of a fiery flame. Add to this the hard, unyielding character of the stones, and we have a marvelous representation of One Who is arrayed for judgment. Let us not for a moment imagine that this is a fixed likeness of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is no more so than the representation of Christ Himself as a little Lamb. It is an assumed appearance, suited to the action of the vision and the work of judging the earth.

The Figure on the throne was doubtless a human form, such as Ezekiel saw in his vision (Eze. 1:26), for such phrases as "the right hand of Him Who is sitting on the throne" (5:1) would not be intelligible otherwise.

In the midst of judgment God remembers mercy. Indeed, judgment is God's strange work, and, in its ultimate analysis, it is a work of mercy. It always holds a promise of an aftermath of blessing. This is especially true of the judgments of this unveiling, for they will be followed by blessing upon blessing, such as this earth has never known before.

Surrounding the fiery splendor of the throne is the encircling rainbow. Like a halo it hovers over the terrible tokens of fiery indignation. It surrounds the throne with the promise of peace. Unlike the normal rainbow, it has but one color, an emerald green, delightful to the eye and restful to the spirit. It, too, is like a stone, for God's promises stand, even in the midst of judgment.

No doubt the rainbow also stands as a token that God remembers His ancient covenant with every living creature (Gen. 9:9-17). The condition of the world has once more become as it was before the deluge and invites a like doom (Mat. 24:37; Luke 17:26). But of one thing we may be certain. The judgment will not be by water. There will be no deluge to drown the disobedient, no flood to destroy the offenders.

To the anointed eye the scene thus far gives a clear intimation that the crisis of earth's history is impending. The truce which has existed is withdrawn. The Divine Majesty appears as a consuming fire. Peace is no longer present, but appears as a promise. We have come to the turning point of God's dealings with mankind. He is bent on blessing, but the first act in the drama of earth's restoration is fraught with fiery judgment.

The gathering tempest about to break upon the world

of rebels is further intimated by the lightnings and voices and thunders which issue from the throne. These are the tokens of His anger, the ventings of His wrath. In nature lightning is dangerous when it strikes, but most beneficial in its effect. The overcharged and unbalanced state of the atmosphere before a storm is very disturbing to one of nervous temperament, and, if suffered to increase, would make life unbearable. What a relief, after a storm has cleared the air and brought the powers of nature into balance once more! It is worth the terror of the lightning flash and the trembling of the thunder crash, to find the elements in accord again.

The transformation of God's present throne of grace to a throne of judgment finds a corresponding change in the aspect of His ministers. We read, "Who is making . . . His ministers a flame of fire" (Heb. 1:7). Here they are represented by seven torches of fire, burning before the throne. These are the seven spirits who are associated with Jehovah and Christ in the opening greeting (1:4). Later on they are presented as the seven horns and the seven eyes of the Lambkin (5:6). No doubt they are to be identified with the seven messengers who stand before God and who sound the seven trumpets, for that action is in perfect accord with their appearance in this opening vision. They are not torches for *light*, but torches of *fire*. They are prepared to consume and to destroy. They are ready for the day that consumes "as a stove, and all the arrogant, and all that do wickedly are straw, and the day that comes sets them aflame, says Jehovah of hosts, which shall not relinquish to them root or bough" (Mal. 4:1). These are the ministers that do His will, the executives of the throne.

What warrant there may be for taking these seven spirits as the one Spirit of God we know not. Indeed it seems most incongruous to take the spirit of God in its plenitude down from the throne and place it *before*

the throne. If there could be any such division in God we would see the Spirit *on* the throne, for God *is* spirit. The fact that these seven spirits are also described as the horns of the Lambkin—the instruments which He uses in the judgment—makes it sufficiently clear that they are not the one Spirit of God. Christ is God's Executive, and they are the ministers who put His commands into effect. All the symbols of judgment so far were suggestive of fire. The world must be purified by fiery judgments ere it is a fit place for the reign of righteousness. But all of this is based upon a previous judgment, by water. This is symbolized by the floor on which the whole scene is staged. It is like a glassy sea, solid water, like ice. The world was once purified by this fluid in the flood and God's judgment proceeds upon this fact. This is the foundation for the fiery vengeance which ensues. Purification by water is a physical, outward cleansing. Its results were not radical or permanent. Something more is needed. Hence a new agent is employed. In matter it brings about a radical, chemical change which endures. It purifies intrinsically, not merely on the surface. Past judgments, the disruption of Genesis 1:2, and the deluge, were by water. Future judgments, the day of wrath which we are about to study, and the dissolution of the earth and the heavens after the thousand years, are by fire. Hence they introduce us to permanent and abiding results and usher in the eons of the eons. Well may we thank God for the severity of these judgments!

This is the kind of throne that is needed to put an end to the political chaos which characterizes the world to-day. In vain do we depend upon the people for salvation. It is futile to look to leagues for deliverance. Instinctively men have turned to strong, stern dictators, or have given their representatives unrestricted powers, in order to avert impending ruin. When the great work of judging and cleansing the earth is in view, God does not call

a convention of the leading statesmen to debate upon the proper process, He does not invalidate all by using half way measures. In awful majesty He deals out His fiery indignation, in terrible justice He sends His lurid lightning strokes, and no sinner will escape the fearful ordeal of His fury, so that no wrong will remain to mar the millennial reign.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 4:4-6a

⁴And surrounding the throne are twenty-four thrones, and on the twenty-four thrones elders are sitting, clothed in white garments, and on their heads are golden wreaths.

⁵And out of the throne are issuing lightnings and voices and thunders. And seven torches of fire are burning in sight of the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. ⁶And in sight of the throne it is as a glassy sea, like crystal.

THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS

AROUND the throne are twenty-four thrones, occupied by twenty-four elders. Just as one of them afterwards asks John concerning the vast throng with palm branches in their hands, we, too are tempted to inquire: "Who are they?" We shall seek to imitate John and endeavor to extract our answer from the Scriptures themselves. We shall gather the significance of their title from its usage. We shall learn who they are from their own acts and utterances.

The almost unanimous consent of expositors that they represent the church in glory has been ably championed, but never satisfactorily settled for those who are acquainted with the place and portion of the ecclesia which is the body of Christ. In this economy, this body is God's means of manifesting His multifarious wisdom to the celestial hosts (Eph. 3:10), and in the on-coming eon, in which this vision finds its place, we are to display the transcendent riches of His *grace* (Eph. 2:7). We are not fitted to dispense wrath. It is not in keeping with the character of our calling. It is out of line with the love which He has lavished upon us. But the elders deal out indignation. They preside over the most awful period of wrath in the history of mankind. Before taking our seats around this terrifying judgment throne, let us be sure we are not usurping the place and functions of others more fitted for the execution of God's strange work.

Truly, the saints shall judge the world, and *we* shall judge messengers, but the word judge means no more than *rule*, and this section does not deal with the judgment of *messengers* but of the *earth*.

In our attempt to identify the twenty-four elders we should bear in mind the character of the vision. It is concerned with a throne and government. We should confine ourselves to creation, for redemption does not enter this scene until the seven-sealed scroll appears. We should enlarge our conceptions to fit the scope of the context.

The universal range of this judgment scene is clearly set forth in the next chapter, which records the doxology of "every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and underneath the earth and on the sea, and all those in them. . ." (5:13). And it is of the utmost significance that the response to this universal outburst of praise consists of an "amen" by the four animals, and the elders prostrate and worship. The elders and the animals are evidently the representatives of all created beings, except perhaps, the messengers, or angels, who have their own place distinct from the others.

This vision includes the whole realm of creation. The elders stand for the heavenly creatures, the animals for those on earth, while the messengers constitute the link between them. Thus the entire range of intelligent creation is accounted for, and the magnificence and magnitude of the great drama about to be enacted opens up to our gaze. It is no local judgment, limited in its effects, but, as befits the crisis of the eons, the heads of all created beings are concerned to execute the judgment due.

As the opening action of the vision is confined to *creation*, and the elders and animals and messengers are concrete expressions representing all created beings, we may well inquire whether we cannot corroborate this

view by the account of creation in other portions of the Scriptures. One passage especially confirms this interpretation. In the first chapter of Colossians we learn that, in the Firstborn was created the universe in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions, or sovereignties or authorities (Col. 1:16).

In this throne scene the heads of heavenly government—the thrones and dominions and sovereignties and authorities—are symbolized by the twenty-four elders. The heads of earthly creation are symbolized by the four animals.

From time immemorial it has been the custom to use the comparative form “elder” in the special sense of official position. This is seen in our “alderman”, which is simply another form of elder-man.

In our Lord’s day, elders, together with the chief priests and scribes, formed the Sanhedrin, which ruled the nation subject to the Roman governor. Again and again they are associated with the chief priests (Mat. 26:47; 27:1) and with the scribes (Mat. 26:57; 27:41; Mark 11:27). Hence we are safe in concluding that the function of the elders in this vision is distinct from both scribe and priest. We are confirmed in this by the fact that the twenty-four elders are never seen in the temple. Yet, before the throne, on one occasion, they perform the functions of both priest and Levite, when they offer the prayers of the saints in golden bowls and play on harps. This, however, seems to be incidental.

Indeed, the ideal priesthood is a royal one. The man who approaches nearest to God is best fitted to rule over others. Thus those who are privileged to have a part in the former resurrection will be clothed in priestly and regal honors. David’s twenty-four courses of the priesthood seem to have been copied from the heavenly original which is partly disclosed in this vision. But these

were more than priests. They were *governors* of the sanctuary and of the house (1 Chron. 24:5).

The place given to elders in the Pauline ecclesias confirms the conclusion that they are rulers. We read of "elders who have presided ideally" (1 Tim. 5:17). An elder must first control his own household (1 Tim. 3:4, 5). The control of the ecclesia was evidently in the hands of the elders who were accorded a special standing and dignity. They were not to be upbraided (1 Tim. 5:1), nor were they to be accused, except with two or three witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19).

The same officers were common among the ecclesias of the Circumcision. Peter exhorts to submission to the elders (1 Pet. 5:5). John calls himself an elder (2 John 1; 3 John 1).

If we add to all this the fact that they sit on *thrones* and are confined almost entirely to the Throne Section of this prophecy, the regal nature of their office is settled beyond question. They are the high hierarchy of heaven, the sovereigns of the celestial spheres.

It is not a mere coincidence that there are just *twelve* references to these *twenty-four* elders. Divine administration is ever apportioned thus. We hardly need mention the fact that the *twelve* apostles will rule the *twelve* tribes in the millennial earth. Have we not here the twice twelve dignitaries who rule the heavenly courts subordinate to the Enthroned One?

We shall now examine the twelve occasions on which they are mentioned and the seven utterances which are recorded of them.

Their first appearance is of paramount importance (4:4). Never before do we read of elders occupying *thrones*, so we are more than confident that they represent the rulers of the realms above. But there seems to be more than this. They are clothed in white. White garments are given as an award of merit. They wear

wreaths. Wreaths are for those only who have come off victors in some trial or contest. It is evident that these rulers, like all to whom God confides the duties of state, have won their place in some mighty conflict of which we have hardly more than a hint in the sacred volume.

The second time the elders are mentioned we find them casting their wreaths before Him Who lives for the eons of the eons, and they worship the Creator. Creation has been hymned from the beginning when the sons of God shouted for joy. It is not often that we are allowed to listen to the high worship of heaven.

THE CREATION HYMN OF THE ELDERS

Worthy art Thou, O Lord, our Lord and God,
To get glory and honor and power;
For the universe Thou dost create,
And because of Thy will it is created and was (4:11).

The august simplicity of this hymn is matched by its sublimity. In the language of a child it discloses a secret unknown to the sage. The world's wisest philosophers have groped in darkness to find a fitting First Cause to account for creation. Not one of them has been able to trace its genealogy back to the Creator. And none of them, should they find Him, could tell us why He created. Hence they cannot glorify Him as they should. But the elders know. The universe is not only the work of God, but it originated in the will of God. It is the fruit of His heart hunger. Love cannot live alone. It must have an object on which to lavish its affection. The universe is the outlet of God's love. It was created through His will. For this He deserves the glory and honor and power which the elders ascribe to Him in this hymn of creation.

The word "universe" is simply "all" in the original. God created "the all". It causes great distress to some of His saints to believe this. Should they be asked to join the song of the elders they would surely wish to

add “Thou dost create all *good*.” They cannot acknowledge Him as the Creator of “the all”.

The third reference is to one of the elders, who comforts John when no one in heaven, nor on earth, nor underneath the earth was able to open the scroll. He gives the first intimation of the royal Redeemer Who will loose the seven seals. Note the regal language and the reference to David.

Do not be lamenting! *Lo!* He conquers!
The Lion out of Judah's tribe, the Root of
David, is to open the scroll and to loose its
seven seals! (5:5).

It is most fitting that the Lord from heaven should have His conquest heralded by a heavenly dignitary, for the earth has rejected Him.

- The taking of the scroll by the Lambkin is the most momentous act in this great apocalyptic tragedy. It stirs the whole creation from center to circumference. First the four animals and the elders join in their new song of praise. Then myriads of messengers take up the strain. And thence it sweeps on until every creature in heaven and on earth and underneath the earth and on the sea join in the universal anthem to the throne-centered Lambkin.

The new song of the elders and animals presents one of the most difficult problems in the whole Unveiling. It has been used to prove that the elders and animals are redeemed sinners, for they sing, according to our versions, “Thou hast redeemed *us*”, and “Thou hast made *us* . . . kings and priests”, and “*we* shall reign” on the earth. If all these readings are correct, the elders and animals can represent no one else but the saints in Israel, for they alone will be kings and priests and reign on the earth. The elders have golden bowls brimming with incenses, which are the prayers of the saints. How can they be the saints themselves and at the same time offer the prayers of the saints?

A portion of the difficulty is readily solved by the fact that the best manuscripts put all of the latter part of the song in the third person, and read “Thou dost also make *them* a kingdom and priesthood”, and “*they* will be reigning on the earth”. As the principal manuscripts, including Codex Sinaiticus, and all modern editors, follow these readings there is no question of their correctness.

The only reason why this correct reading is not followed by some expositors is well expressed in the following footnote from Seiss’ Lectures on the Apocalypse: “Some of the best MSS. read ‘*them*’ in place of *us*; but the sense is not altered by it, or by reading ‘*they*’, as some MSS. do in the next clause instead of ‘*we*’; for the subject is settled by the preceding declaration to be the persons uttering the song, namely, by the phrase ‘*redeemed us*’; the genuineness of which must be considered established since the discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus.”

On the other hand, Dr. E. W. Bullinger, in “The Apocalypse”, takes exactly the opposite view. He says, in a note, “Lachman, Tischendorf, Alford, Wordsworth, Westcott and Hort, and the R. V. omit *hêmas*, *us*. Indeed, all the critical authorities are unanimous in substituting the third person for the first in the next verse. But if so, then we *must* have the third person here and not the first person. MS. authority for this is the Alexandrian MS. in the British Museum (cent. iv). The Sinaitic MS. (cent. iv). The Reuchlin MS. (cent. iv). The Ethiopic Version (cent. iv). The Coptic Version (cent. v.). The Harleian MS. No. 1773 in British Museum. It is quoted without the “us” by Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, 248-258, and Fulgentius, a Bishop in Africa, 508-533, so that it was neither in the ancient MSS. from which those versions were made; nor was it in the copies which those two Bishops had before them.”

But Seiss gives the evidence for *us* as follows: "Some critics and expositors have rejected this *hêmas* (*us*), for the reason that it is omitted in the Codex Alexandrinus, and in the Ethiopic Version: though the latter is not much more than a loose paraphrase. The Codex Sinaiticus, however, which was discovered in 1860, and which is of equal antiquity and authority with the Codex Alexandrinus, contains it. The Codex Basilianus, in the Vatican, contains it. The Latin, Coptic or Memphitic, and Arminian, which are of great value, contain it. And so do *all other MSS. and versions*. And to discredit it, simply and only because it does not appear in that one single Codex of Alexandria, is most unreasonable and unjust to the weight of authority for its retention. Dr. Tregelles, on full examination, was firmly convinced of its right to a place in the text, before the Codex Sinaiticus appeared; and the presence of this *hêmas* in that MS., ought to settle the question of its genuineness forever. The evidences from the context, also argue powerfully for a construction which necessarily embraces it, whether expressed or not. We regard it as indubitably genuine".

An examination of Codex Sinaiticus will show that it *does* contain this word. This seriously weakens Dr. Bullinger's position. The manuscript evidence is clearly in favor of *us* in the first part of the song, and even more decided for *them* and *they* in the second part. Both of the expositors we have cited claim that it *must* be the same throughout. If the elders speak of themselves at first then they *must* continue to do so. If they speak of others at the end then they *must* have started so. Both reject good readings in order to gain this uniformity.

Difficult as it undoubtedly is, let us strive against the temptation to conform the text of Scripture to our understanding of it. There is no reason or right in changing one part of the song to a supposed conformity with

another. The elders sing of themselves at the beginning and of the saints whose prayers they are offering at the close. They speak of two distinct themes. First they show why He is worthy to take the scroll. Secondly they foretell the result of His action on the earth. He is worthy because He has bought *them* by His blood. His opening of the seals will give the *saints* the kingdom on earth. A translation follows:

THE NEW SONG OF THE ANIMALS AND ELDERS

Worthy art Thou to be taking the scroll and to open its seals,
For Thou wast slain and dost buy us for God by Thy blood.
Out of every tribe and language and people and nation
Thou dost also make them a kingdom and priesthood for our
God,
And they will be reigning on the earth.

Wherein does His worthiness consist? In the redemption of the saints? But the judgments that follow the opening of the seals affect far more than the faithful few who are true to Him. What right has He to visit the earth with vengeance and even drag down Satan from his place in the heavens? The reason is given. *Because He has bought the whole creation and paid for it by His blood.* Let us rid our minds and hearts of the crude notion that the blood of Christ has no claim on any but those who seek shelter beneath its power. Its value is not exhausted by redemption.

The first occurrence of the word for *buy* will not only give us the meaning of the word but also illustrate how He buys all creation in connection with the establishment of the kingdom. In the parable of the treasure hid in the field (Mat. 13:44) the saints are represented by the treasure, and "the field is the world" (38). When He finds the treasure He does not confine His efforts to it, but pays the price for the whole field and so gains the treasure. There is no thought of redemption here. He sold all that He had. All that a man has will he give

for his soul. The soul is in the blood. The blood of Christ—all that He had—is the price He has paid for the field. The blood of Christ has overpaid creation's value. All creatures belong to Him and should acknowledge Him as their Owner. The false teachers of this very judgment period are accused of "disowning the Owner Who buys them" (2 Pet. 2:1). It is as the rightful Owner of the universe that the Lambkin takes the seven sealed scroll and breaks its seals. Redemption leads to *liberty*, purchase to *slavery*. The slave who is redeemed is free: the man who is bought is in bonds. It is nowhere said that the elders and animals represent redeemed sinners. This would have no logical bearing on the great question which is uppermost in the vision. The redemption of the saints does not entitle Him to judge sinners. But the purchase of all created beings—saints and sinners, good and bad—invests Him with the power to redeem His people and judge those who rebel against His authority.

The rendering "*hast redeemed us*" is misleading. It should read "*dost buy us*". The A. V. translates this word *buy* twenty-eight times and *redeem* only here and in the fourteenth chapter. There is a vast difference between *buying* and *redeeming*.

Let us remember that, at the time when the elders sing this song, the universe has come to the very climax of evil. This judgment session is convened to deal with a rebellious earth. The man of sin is on the scene, and Satan has marshalled his heavenly hosts. And *this* is the universe which He created, the offspring of His will! Yet it is just such a universe which will get Him glory and honor and power.

It is no relief to seek to exonerate God, as the gnostics did, by interposing some of God's creatures between Himself and evil. That false faith invented a series of subordinate divinities, the lowest being responsible for

evil. So some of His saints seek to shield Him by interposing Adam, and his will, or Satan and his rebellion. Yet Adam was God's creation and Satan himself is His creature. It was not Satan who planted the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Eden. Why did not God plant two trees, one for the knowledge of good, and the other for the knowledge of evil? Was it not because the two are inseparable? Can good be known apart from evil, or evil apart from good? Are they not like light and darkness, which we know only by contrast? Never let us doubt God's wisdom in planting one tree for the knowledge of both good and evil. Rather let us rejoice that the knowledge of evil will always constitute the prime ingredient in our appreciation of good when evil itself is no more.

It is true, and well to note, that evil is introduced by intermediaries. God did not directly afflict Job. Satan was His instrument. Yet Job was not deceived. Even the dim light in which he lived was sufficient to lead him back to the One Who is the primal Cause of all. He did not say, Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil *at the hand of Satan?* There would have been much truth in that. He received evil *at the hand of God* (Job 2:10). Let us learn the lesson Job knew so well and boldly say, "The *Lord* gave and the *Lord* hath taken away; *blessed be the name of the Lord!*" Is this a sin? Is this charging God foolishly? "In all this", we read, "Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:21, 22).

The remaining utterances of the elders confirm the interpretation we have advanced. One of the elders tells John who the vast throng are (7:13-17):

"And one of the elders answered, saying to me, 'These who are clothed in white robes—who are they, and whence came they?' And I have declared to him: 'My lord, you are aware.' And he said to me, 'These are

they who are coming out of the great affliction. And they rinse their robes, and they whiten them in the blood of the Lambkin. Therefore they are before the throne of God and are offering divine service to Him day and night in His temple. And He Who is sitting on the throne will be tabernacling over them. They shall be hungering no longer; nor shall they be thirsting any longer; no, nor should the sun be falling on them, nor any heat, seeing that the throne-centered Lambkin shall be shepherding them, and shall be guiding them to living springs of water, and every tear shall God be brushing away from their eyes.' ''

Their last long utterance is characteristic of the part they play and celebrates the consummation of their work. The judgment of the evil is over, the "judgment" or reward of the good is due (11:16-18): "And the twenty-four elders who are sitting on their thrones before God fall on their faces and worship God, saying, 'We are thanking Thee, Lord God Almighty, Who art and Who wast, seeing that Thou hast taken Thy great power and dost reign. And the nations are angered, and Thy indignation came, and the era for the dead to be judged, and to give wages to Thy slaves the prophets, and to the saints and to those who are fearing Thy name, the small and the great, and to blight those who are blighting the earth.' ''

The seventh and last utterance concerns the judgment of great Babylon. Both the elders and the animals join in the jubilation over her doom. After the vast throng in heaven has voiced its approbation of God's judgment, they assent with an "*Amen! Hallelujah!*"

In closing, we must once more express our thankfulness that our ministry is so far above that of the twenty-four elders. They appear upon the scene for the execution of judgment against the ungodly. We are His chosen channel of grace. Often do his dear saints give

vent to a thoughtless "Hallelujah!", little dreaming its true import. It is never found except in connection with God's strange work. It is always used in praising Jah for His stern inflictions. It never finds a place in the responses of grace. O, that the saints of this transcendent economy of God's unforced favor would drink so deeply of the delicious draught of grace that all desire for the lower spheres of blessing would vanish! It is not ours to choose, but, if it were, who would part with the priceless privilege of revealing the transcendent riches of God's grace to these celestial sovereigns, in order to usurp their place and power in righting a rebellious earth?

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 4:6b-11

And centering in the throne and around the throne are four animals replete with eyes in front and behind. ⁷And the first animal is like a lion, and the second animal is like a calf, and the third animal has a face like as a human being, and the fourth animal is like a flying vulture. ⁸And the four animals—each one of them has six wings apiece. Around and inside they are replete with eyes.

And they have no rest day and night, saying,

“Holy! holy! holy!
Lord God Almighty,
Who wast and Who art
And Who art coming!”

⁹And whenever the animals should be giving glory and honor and thanks to Him Who is sitting on the throne, Who is living for the eons of the eons (*Amen!*), ¹⁰the twenty-four elders, also, will be falling in sight of Him Who is sitting on the throne and will be worshiping Him Who is living for the eons of the eons (*Amen!*), and they are casting their wreaths in sight of the throne, saying,

¹¹ “Worthy art Thou, O Lord, our Lord and God,
To get glory and honor and power;
For the universe Thou dost create,
And because of Thy will it is created and was.”

THE CHERUBIM

THE cherubim of the Hebrew Scriptures and the animals or living creatures (called "beasts" in the common version), which support the throne of the Divine Majesty in the apocalyptic visions, are identical. The cherubim are called animals or "living creatures" by the prophet Ezekiel. He does not call them cherubim in his first vision, but in the tenth chapter, where he speaks again and again of the cherubim, he tells us: "This is the *living creature* that I saw under the God of Israel by the river Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubim" (Eze. 10: 15, 20). This identity makes it possible for us to trace the cherubim from Genesis to Revelation, and, by noting all that is said, gain some conception of the part they play in God's universe.

Of one point we may be positive: they are closely connected with *life*. Their very name ZQA, *zōa*, means *living ones*, and is used by us today in such combinations as *zoology*, the science of animal life, *zoological*, pertaining to animals. In fact, they are *animals*. Our prejudices are very stubborn. We do not object to their being called *beasts* in the Authorized Version. But to call the "living creatures" *animals* grates harshly on our ears. In all the other occurrences of this word this term is most appropriate. Why, then, refuse to use it here?

Beside the passages in the Unveiling it occurs but three times. In Heb. 13: 11 we read that those *animals* whose blood is carried into the holy places by the chief

priest for sin, these bodies are burned up outside the camp (Lev. 6:30). The animals in this case were a bullock and a goat (Lev. 16:14, 15, 27). In 2 Pet. 2:12 and Jude 10 men are compared to irrational *animals* (rather than "brute beasts"). We may not conclude from this that the animals of the Unveiling are confined to the irrational, but that they include them. Man is an animal and must be included in the term, for one of the faces is that of a human being.

Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures the usual word which represents the word "beast" in our version, is this word *living* [creature] which is much better rendered *animal*. The word which Ezekiel applies to the cherubim is used scores of times of animals. Indeed, Ezekiel himself does so often (14:15, 21; 29:5; 31:6, 13, etc.).

When first we meet the cherubim they are associated with the divine judgment on Adam (Gen. 3:24). Along with the flaming sword they camp at the east of the garden of Eden to keep, or preserve, the way of the tree of life. The mere mention of the name gives us no clue to their number or appearance. The most we may be able to infer is that, as they are always found in the booth, or camp, of the Divine Presence, here the Lord Himself probably camped eastward of the garden and here He was still accessible to mankind. They brought their offerings to Him there. The curse of Cain was pronounced there. This was the "presence of the Lord" from which Cain was banished.

The position of the animals in this Unveiling is in perfect accord with the references to the cherubim in the Hebrew Scriptures. They are incorporated into the throne of the Divine Majesty. When Moses was instructed how to make the cover or propitiatory of the ark he was told to make two cherubim, one at each end, not *on* but *of* the same substance as the cover itself (Ex. 25:17-20). They were made out of one piece of gold

(Ex. 37:7). They were extensions of the cover itself, while their wings were stretched out over it and their faces were intent upon it.

Not only in the propitiatory were the cherubim seen, but also in the curtains (Ex. 26:1) and the veil (Ex. 26:31), wrought into their very texture, so that nothing was so prominent or so striking to one in the holy of holies, where the Shekinah dwelt, as the pervading presence of the cherubim. They were to be seen above on the ceiling, all around on the walls and the veil, and in the center, a part of the golden throne.

Here it was that Moses met Jehovah. God spoke to him from between the two cherubim (Num. 7:89). When the Philistines defeated Israel they brought the ark into the camp because Jehovah of Hosts was between the cherubim. And the Philistines were afraid and said, "God is come into the camp!" (1 Sam. 4:4-7). David changed Jehovah's order and carried the ark on a new cart instead of on the shoulders of the priests. Once again the cherubim are associated with judgment, for Uzzah touched it to keep it from falling, and was struck dead for his error (2 Sam. 6:2-7).

Not only are they evident everywhere in the house, but the ten lavers in the court were supported by lions, oxen and cherubim, and the same figures were graven on it (1 Kings 7:29, 36).

In Solomon's temple the cherubim are even more conspicuous than in the tabernacle. Two large carvings of cherubim with outstretched wings reached clear across the holy of holies, so that they touched each other's wings in the center. They touched the two walls as well. They were overlaid with pure gold (1 Kings 6:23-28). All the walls and doors of the house were also carved with cherubic figures, covered with gold. The veil, like that of the tabernacle, was wrought with cherubim (2 Chron. 3:14).

Hezekiah, in many ways the best of the line of the kings, and a marvelous type of the suffering Messiah, addresses his petition to the One Who dwells between the cherubim (2 Kings 19:15). The result was that Sennacherib was defeated by Jehovah's messenger.

Ezekiel, in his opening vision, gives us a detailed description of the cherubim as they appeared to him, though he does not call them by this name. He, like John in his apocalyptic vision, calls them *living ones* or *animals*. They had the appearance of a man. Each one had four faces and four (or possibly, six) wings. These correspond exactly with the four animals of John's vision: the man, the lion, the ox and the vulture. They were beneath the throne.

In the tenth chapter the ox is replaced by the face of a cherub (10:14), yet this statement is omitted in the LXX (10:14). Ezekiel identifies them as the cherubim or animals which he had seen before, hence it is likely that the last list in Ezekiel is an interpolation. The faces correspond with the animals of the Unveiling.

As usual, the presence of the cherubim is the signal for judgment. They reach out and take fire from between them, which is scattered over the city in token of the judgment to follow.

The glory of the Lord's presence leaves the cherubim for the threshold of the house (9:3; 10:4). Then it returns to its place above the cherubim and removes to the entrance of the east gate (10:18, 19). Then it stands upon the mountain to the east of the city (11:23).

Ezekiel's temple, which will stand in the millennial kingdom, is not so lavish of cherubic ornamentation as Solomon's house. There seem to be no cherubim in the holy of holies except those on the ark. The walls and folding doors were ornamented with alternate palm trees and cherubim. The face of a man faced one way and the face of a young lion faced in the opposite direction. The

ox and the vulture do not appear in Ezekiel's temple.

The covenant recalled by the encircling rainbow was made with the fowl, the cattle, and the beasts of the earth, as well as with mankind (Gen. 9:8-17). In the beginning the animal kingdom, which is, with more than "scientific" accuracy, called "the moving soul which has life" (Gen. 1:20), is divided into seven groups. Besides those enumerated in the covenant with Noah, there are the "great whales" and "every living soul that moveth" in the waters (Gen. 1:21) as well as the "creeping things" of the earth (1:25).

Before pressing the connection of the creatures contained in the ark with the cherubim, we will seek to define the distinctive characteristics of the whole animal creation of which these form the major portion.

After the cataclysm of the second verse of Genesis, the order of the restoration of the earth and of the creation upon it was progressive. The first day saw the division between light and darkness. The second spread out the expanse between the waters above and beneath. The third day saw the separation of the dry land from the seas. It also witnessed the first forms of life, the grass, yielding seed, and the trees, yielding fruit with seed within it. Here is *life*, but no *motion* and no *soul*. The fourth day was devoted to the celestial luminaries. On the fifth day we have the creation of life again, as on the third day, but it is especially qualified as the *moving soul*. The sea and the air are filled with life which, unlike the grass and trees, which would die if their roots were separated from the soil in which they grow, are detached and capable of motion and of sensation. These were brought forth by the waters.

As usual, the sevenfold division is segregated into two groups of four and three. Two of these are ignored in the covenant with Noah for the reason, doubtless, that they could not be destroyed by a deluge, hence needed

no assurance that it would not be repeated. We have no reason to believe that the fish perished in the flood or that they were preserved in the ark. The same is true of the water mammals. While the covenant seems to include every living soul with Noah in the ark, the "creeping things" are omitted from the special list in the covenant.

On the sixth day the *land* brings forth souls, cattle and creeping things and beasts and man, who is made master of all the moving souls which have been created.

Animate creation, then, is divided into flora and fauna, plant and animal. Both have *life*, but only the latter have life detached from the earth, are capable of independent motion, are endowed with consciousness, or soul.

With these facts before us we perceive that the cherubim are not haphazard specimens of life but are confined to the *animals* of the *land* and *air*. "Creeping things" are excluded. The reason does not seem far to find when we remember that the *dragon*, that old *serpent*, is figured by the head of the creeping creation. The lion is the king of wild beasts, the bullock is the head of the herds, the vulture is the autocrat of the air, and man is master of them all.

Thus the faces of the animals or cherubim establish a definite connection with the living moving souls which live on the land. Though seen in the heavens, they suggest the earth. Herein they differ greatly from the elders. In character at least, one is entirely celestial, the other purely terrestrial. The elders hardly appear in the Scriptures at all until the powers of heaven are in view in the latest letters of Paul and Peter. The cherubim, on the contrary, appear at the very threshold of earth's story and were the constant center of Israel's worship.

From the various symbols of animal life in this prophecy we may arrive at certain conclusions which

will clear our way in understanding the symbol of the four animals. In the throne scene in which they first appear we also have the symbol of the Lambkin. We are sure that this is not literal. Christ never was and never will be metamorphosed into an actual lambkin. So we may be sure that we have here, not actual members of the fauna of heaven, of species quite different from any known on earth, but symbolic representations of the heads of earthly dominion.

This view of the cherubim is confirmed by the various forms which they assume. Were they creatures of blood and flesh, their appearance would be the same or similar each time they appear. Let us consider their wings. In the tabernacle and temple they probably were furnished with two wings each (Ex. 25: 20; 37: 9; 1 Ki. 6: 24, 27). In Ezekiel's vision, however, they appear with four wings, two of which were spread out above, and two covered their bodies (Eze. 1: 11, 23). In the Unveiling they have six wings (4: 8). In each case they assume a shape in accord with their surroundings. This flexibility of form is sufficient evidence for assuming that they are not zoological monstrosities, but figurative representations of spiritual realities.

It is always a delicate matter to decide the meaning of a symbol, and the fact that this one has been so variously interpreted should deter us from being too dogmatic. One of the most popular explanations was that they represented the four evangelists. From this came the association of the lion with Mark, and the "eagle" with John. They have been taken as representative of various epochs: the vulture denoting the millennial era; the man, the so-called Christian; the bullock, the Mosaic; and the lion, the patriarchal. Then again they have been associated with the twelve tribes of Israel. It was said that the standard of Judah was a lion, of Ephraim, a bullock, of Reuben, a man, of Dan a vulture. Under

these representative tribes all the rest were marshalled.

The one point on which most modern interpreters seem agreed is that they are symbols of the redeemed. But they, as well as the elders, do not sing of their redemption, but that they have been *bought*. As the blood of Christ is a sufficient price for all creation, all has been bought, but all has not been redeemed. The fact that they appear in the first section of this vision, dealing with creation, ought to have been a bar to this interpretation.

There ought to be some kind of congruity between this symbol and that which it purports to represent. If it is limited to mankind, why is only *one* of the animals given a human face? It would be more suggestive if *none* were thus endowed. But as one is human and the rest animals of a lower order of creation, we cannot help concluding that the reality has to do with that in which man is associated with the sentient creatures which share with him the dominion of earth.

No one who has read Ephesians and has reveled in the grace which is ours in Christ Jesus, and is in sympathy with God's purpose to display the transcendent riches of His grace in us, in the coming eons, can entertain the thought that these animals represent the church which is Christ's body. They deal out judgment, not grace. They call on the destroying horsemen (6:1). One of them gives the seven messengers the seven golden bowls brimming with the fury of God (15:7). Could we do such a thing? We should be profoundly thankful that such work is not for us.

By a process of elimination we may arrive at the correct interpretation of this symbol. This august judgment session is the crisis of the eons. The triumphant march of the powers of evil is about to be checked. All creation is vitally interested in the proceedings, and we may be sure that all creation is represented. We have

already seen that heaven has its delegates in the twenty-four elders, and in the myriads of messengers. But the special scene of judgment is the earth. Are its denizens without representation in this session of high heaven at the very crisis of its history? Far from it. In the four animals we see the symbol of the only part of creation still without representation—the living souls that move upon the earth. The animals are living souls as well as man, and have a much greater right to blessing than humankind, for their thralldom is the result of man's sin. In the judgments which flow from this fiery throne, there are promises of relief and liberation. Through them they, too, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God (Rom. 8:21). Man shares the creatures' groan and the creatures shall share his release.

Our traditional training would lead us to look for the animals somewhere on the far fringes of the throne encircling throng. Surely the elders and the angels are nearer to the seat of Majesty than the souls of earth! Is not divine government fixed firmly in the hands of these celestial dignitaries? Not so! Not to messengers does He subject the future inhabited earth (Heb. 2:5). That is in the hands of a Man. And even the heavenly realms shall be ruled by earth souls such as we, who become members of Christ's body. Through humiliated humankind God will reveal the deepest lessons of His heart to the highest creatures in the universe. And so we find the cherubim where they belong—centering in the throne and around the throne—like the golden figures on the mercy seat, *a part of the very throne of God*.

Only One is nearer, if that may be. The Lambkin is in the center of the throne and of the four animals. Yet He, too, was one with them—a living Soul. So that in this symbolic scene is pre-figured the outcome of the impending judgment day.

The four animals, then, are the heads of animal creation on the earth, and represent man and his fellow creatures of the land and air, who, like him, are living souls. Weak and worthless as they seem, compared with the heavenly hosts, they are the center of the divine administration to which this vision is the prelude.

It is the groaning creation which invokes judgment to right its wrongs. It is the suffering of conscious souls which calls the four horsemen to their awful task. And it is those who endure the burdens of great Babylon who hand the bowls of vengeance to the messengers. Apostate Israel has bought her blessings at the cost of untold misery and weariness and woe on the part of the souls who served her foul purpose. In His just retribution, a living soul, the symbol of their victims, brings on the bowls of vengeance.

Just as the *blood* of Abel cried to God from the ground, for it was Abel's soul, or suffering, so the *souls* under the altar cry for vengeance, because they figure the fearful fate of the martyrs, so the heads of sentient soul life on earth call for the judgment which rights their wrongs and answers to their sufferings.

Let us not miss the marvelous message taught in the position of the cherubim. The angels are near the throne. The elders are nearer. But the animals are nearest. Indeed they are a component of the throne itself. The earth may be small and insignificant compared with the heavens, but it has become, by association with the sufferings of God's Son, the center of His administration of the universe.

It will greatly enrich our lives if we view the birds and beasts of earth in the light of this astounding revelation. Notwithstanding man's humiliating history and the fact that he has dragged down the creatures under him into the servitude of vanity, God will get Him glory and honor and thanks through these slaves of corruption, and not only so, but they *lead* in the worship of the Creator.

The heavenly hosts follow them. Though polluted by sin, it is through them that God's holiness is revealed. Hence their constant cry is "Holy! holy! holy!" Just as the same tree in Eden brought the knowledge of good to mankind through the experience of evil, so the universe will discern the high holiness of the Creator through the vile creatures of the soil. It is through them and their disobedience that His glories as Lord and as Almighty, or All-Sufficient, are revealed. Their stubbornness shows Him to be a Master, their lack displays His sufficiency. The earth and its living souls play the principal part in God's government of the universe. They are incorporated into His very throne, nearer to Him than the dignitaries of the heavens, and much closer than the "angelic" host.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 5:1-5

5 And I perceived on the right hand of Him Who is sitting on the throne a scroll, written in front and on the back, and sealed up with seven seals. ²And I perceived a strong messenger proclaiming with a loud voice: "*Who is worthy to open the scroll, and to loose its seals?*" ³And no one in heaven, nor on earth, nor underneath the earth, was able to open the scroll neither to look at it. ⁴And I lamented much that no one was found worthy to open the scroll, neither to look at it. ⁵And one of the elders is saying to me, "Do not be lamenting! *Lo!* He conquers! The Lion out of Judah's tribe, the Root of David, is to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals!"

THE SEVEN-SEALED SCROLL

WE are now about to behold the most momentous act in human history, for when the Lambkin takes the scroll from the right hand of Him Who is sitting on the throne, the tide turns in the affairs of mankind, the crisis is reached which will eventuate in the utter destruction of evil and the ultimate triumph of good. Up to that moment the powers of darkness were in the ascendant: from that time they are surely doomed. On so sublime a subject it were sin to slight a single detail, so we will inquire carefully into its significance.

To apprehend the import of this section of the vision we must remember that creation's song has been sung. Now we enter upon another theme, which may be summarized in one phrase, *the deliverance of that which has been procured*. One is tempted to narrow it down to one word, *redemption*, yet there is far more than this, both in scope and effect. On the one hand there is the payment of a price which suffices for all creation, not the redeemed alone. On the other the redemption is by power and effects the deliverance of the redeemed.

But before enlarging our vision of this great transaction, let us focus our attention on the scroll upon which our gaze is riveted at the very outset. It may seem pedantic to call it a *scroll*, rather than a *book*. Yet such slight distinctions often have an importance quite beyond the form of the object. Its real shape is evident from an allusion in this very Unveiling. Under the sixth seal heaven recoils as a *scroll* rolling itself up. Our

translators recognized the incongruity of rendering it *book* in this passage, hence they, too, in this one instance, translate "the heaven departed as a *scroll*".

Two other renderings of theirs are of vital value in helping us to understand what this scroll really is. Our Lord speaks of "a *writing* of divorcement" (Mat. 19: 7), and again "a *bill* of divorcement" (Mark 10: 4). In both cases this same Greek word is used. From this it is evident that the scroll was not a book in the sense in which we understand the term, and may have been only a short roll not more than a page in length. It may be as long as the prophecy of Isaiah (Luke 4: 17). It may be no longer than the brief legal document used in granting a divorce.

In the first chapter John is told to write what he is observing in a scroll (1: 11). The Unveiling itself is that scroll. By it God reveals to us what is to come. It has been a great temptation to expositors to make the seven-sealed scroll another medium for unveiling the future. But what confusion is thus created! Nothing is revealed of the contents of the seven-sealed scroll, even after the seals are broken, so that, if it contained a revelation, no one is aware what it is. And why should it? The scroll written by John is amply sufficient for this purpose, for it tells what effect the breaking of each seal produced.

Some think it contained the history of the church. We ourselves believe that, when the true history of the church is revealed, there will be great consternation! But we are not prepared to expect the effects which follow the loosing of these seals.

It has been identified with the scroll referred to by Isaiah (29: 11):

And all vision shall be to you as the words of a scroll
that is sealed,
Which they shall give to one who knows the scroll,
Saying, "Pray read this."
And he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed."

This reference is not apt, for the whole difficulty here lies in the *reading* of the scroll, while the seven-sealed scroll is not read at all, even after it has been opened and all its seals broken.

A more plausible explanation is based on the charge to the prophet Daniel to "seal the scroll, till the era of the end" (Dan. 12:4). And again he is told "the words are stopped up and sealed till the era of the end" (Dan. 12:9). From this we might expect disclosures not found in Daniel. This, indeed, is the case with the Unveiling itself, but not in any case can it be connected with the seven-sealed scroll. Daniel's scroll was to be read. But who knows a single word of the scroll in the hands of the Enthroned One, either before or after the seals are broken?

We are shut up to the important conclusion that this scroll, like those spoken of by our Lord, is not a book to be read, but a legal instrument to be put into execution.

The laws God gave His people were so different from any we are acquainted with that it will be necessary for us to refer to them ere we can fully comprehend the significance of the scroll, sealed and signed, within and without.

Under Jehovah's law the land could not be sold "forever", or to cutting off (Lev. 25:23). No title could be conveyed. All that could be done was to give a lease until the jubilee. At the jubilee the land automatically returned to its proper tenant. If it remained out of his hands until the jubilee there was no redemption necessary. But if it was to be redeemed before that time certain legal processes were customary, and one of these was the breaking of the sealed scroll which constituted the legal record of the transaction. Thus, a sealed scroll was the sign of a forfeited allotment; an open scroll the token of a tenancy redeemed before the jubilee.

Such is the significance of the seven-sealed scroll seen on the hand of Him Who is seated on the throne.

The fifty-year cycle of the jubilee was the type of the grander and greater course of the eons. As all that was forfeited during the fifty years was restored at the jubilee, so all that has been lost during the eons will be recovered at the consummation.

When, however, there was a *goel* or redeemer, a kinsman who was able to buy back what had been mortgaged, there was no need to wait for the jubilee. So, in this case, the deliverance of the saints does not wait until the consummation—when all creatures will receive their own again—but, through the work of the great *goel*, Jesus Christ, they are introduced into an eonian redemption, and enter into the enjoyment of their allotment during the eons of the eons.

There is a precious line of truth in the Scriptures (which our Bibles obliterate), in the distinction between *redemption* and *deliverance*, which is of special interest if we desire to understand this vision. Redemption, in Greek, is literally, a loosening. Deliverance is the same word strengthened by the preplacing of the preposition FROM. It is a FROM-LOOSENING. This, of course, merely suggests the difference in the meaning of the two terms. Their full force can only be gathered from their usage. As the A. V. renders both *redemption* in every place but one (Heb. 11:35), it is useless to study the term there. We will cite all the passages.

Eonian redemption has been made by the one great Sacrifice (Heb. 9:12). So spoke Zacharias, saying

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
Seeing that He visits
And makes a redemption for His people
And rouses a horn of salvation for us . . .
(Luke 1:68).

And so when the prophetess Anna saw the Saviour, she spoke concerning Him to all who are anticipating

redemption in Jerusalem (Luke 2:38). These passages suggest no more than is ordinarily associated with the term redemption. It is the work accomplished on Golgotha. If the seven-sealed scroll was occupied with such a redemption, the seals would have been broken long ago. And we may be sure that none of the terrific calamities which follow the breaking of the seals could possibly result from redemption such as that. No, this is not a scene of redemption, but of *deliverance*.

Redemption is past. Deliverance is future. We are redeemed. We expect to be delivered. This future and effective deliverance is seen in every passage where this form of the word is used. Our Lord told His disciples of the very days described under the seals. He told of the signs in the sun and moon and constellations (Luke 21:25), as under the sixth seal (Un. 6:12), of the fearful perplexity and agitation, and of His glorious coming. Then He said, "Now at the beginning of these occurrences, unbend and lift up your heads, because your *deliverance* is drawing near" (Luke 21:28).

Perhaps the distinction can be grasped if we consider the exodus from Egypt. They were redeemed in Egypt by blood: but they were delivered from Egypt by power. Israel's redemption has been accomplished, but her deliverance is still future.

In like manner the deliverance of those in Christ Jesus is still to come. We have been sealed by the spirit for the day of *deliverance* (Eph. 4:30). We are awaiting the *deliverance* of our bodies (Rom. 8:23). In Christ Jesus (mark the title) we have more than mere redemption. We have *deliverance* (Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). This has not all been realized, but is involved in His glorification. The second of the two passages in Hebrews (Heb. 9:15; 11:35) clearly requires the word *deliverance*, and the translators so render it on this single occasion. The faithful of old did not refuse redemption but *deliverance*.

One passage above all others shows the full force of this word. The earnest of the spirit is ours until the *deliverance* of that which has been procured (Eph. 1: 14). Here is a deliverance which is still future, but which is guaranteed to us by the earnest which we already enjoy. So that we wait for a future deliverance of our bodies and a fullness of spirit which is not known in our present redemption.

Another term of prime importance in connection with this theme is the one we have rendered "that which has been procured" (Eph. 1: 14), which the A. V. renders "purchased possession". The literal rendering, ABOUT-DOING, is little help to its understanding. It seems always to denote that which has been legally acquired and for which payment has been made or satisfaction given, but into which the proper owner has never entered, and of which he has no enjoyment. The passage just quoted makes this clear. The "purchased possession" or "that which has been procured" or secured, is ours, but we have no enjoyment of it until the day of its deliverance.

The English language seems to have no definite term for this idea, and the translators seem to have been rather lax in their renderings, for they use *purchased possession*, *obtain*, *saving*, and *peculiar*, rather a strange assortment to represent one Greek word. The word *procure*, or, perhaps, *secure* (not, to make safe, but to get a position so as to obtain) will cover all cases fairly well. We may speak of "the ecclesia which He *procures* (or *secures*) through His own blood" (Acts 20: 28) but this fails to convey the underlying thought that the actual enjoyment of possession is withheld for the present. This thought is more easily conveyed in the epistle to Timothy: "for those who serve ideally are *securing* for themselves an ideal rank . . ." (1 Tim. 3: 13). It is evident that the full reward of service is in the future, when the Lord comes. This element can hardly be over-

looked in Paul's assurance that "God did not appoint us to indignation, but to the *procuring* of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (1 Thes. 5:8, 9). This follows the phrase "the expectation of salvation", and logically demands a future, not a present deliverance. So that we have the right and title to a salvation which we have never enjoyed as yet.

In Hebrews our translators break away from the thought entirely. Suppose they had rendered the previous passage "but to *save* salvation". That sounds ridiculous, yet it is no more so than the phrase "the *saving* of the soul" (Heb. 10:39). Whenever this phrase really does occur it has reference to the physical delights of the kingdom. Here a similar thought seeks expression. Hebrews who believe *secure*, or make sure of, the future pleasures of the kingdom.

The last passage has been and is a most difficult one to turn into acceptable English. The A. V. "a *peculiar* people" (1 Pet. 2:9) is indeed peculiar. The Revisers changed to "for God's own possession". This is much nearer, but is unfortunate in the addition of "God's own" without warrant in the text. It is, literally, a "people of securing", perhaps better phrased, "a secured people". It refers to the fact that Israel belongs to God, but He has never entered upon the enjoyment of His possession.

Does not all of this lead us up to the crisis when the scroll is opened, and that which has been secured by the blood of Christ, as the Lambkin, is now to be possessed by Him as the Lion? The redemption wrought in weakness is to be realized by a deliverance effected by unstinted force. The breaking of each seal is the signal for another blow at the tottering kingdom of mankind until the seventh ushers in the kingdom of Christ. Let us, then, distinguish between His redemption in the past and His deliverance in the future.

Not only is redemption too mild a term to describe

this great deliverance, but its scope is all too narrow. Truly, the deliverance is wrought for the redeemed, but it involves all of earth's rebels as well as those of heaven and includes within its range the messengers and the celestial hosts above. What right has the Lambkin to judge the earth? Upon what ground can he clear it of its usurpers? The answer lies in the overwhelming value of His blood. It suffices, not only to redeem His own, but to *buy* the whole creation. The elders do not sing "Thou dost *redeem* us", but "Thou dost *buy* us for God by Thy blood". The price paid on Golgotha was sufficient, not only to save His own, but to purchase all that God had lost, not only on earth, but also in the realms above. The former is taught by our Lord Himself in His parable, the latter is seen in the elders' song.

Among the parables of the kingdom He told them of the treasure hid in a field (Mat. 13:44). We would naturally suppose that all He needed to do was to take the treasure for Himself. But He had no right to extract a treasure from a field which was not His. It belonged to the owner of the field. It has been the custom for ages in the East to store valuable goods in secret underground vaults. These were sometimes lost or forgotten, but always remained a part and parcel of the field in which they were dug. So that only the one way lay open to possess such a treasure. It was by the purchase of the field itself.

The parable is plain. Israel, redeemed, is the treasure. But what is the field? He had just told His disciples, *the field is the world* (Mat. 13:38). In order to possess and enjoy His treasure, Israel, He has purchased the whole world. It is His. And the judgments of the seals proceed apace upon that premise. Lest we should limit the term "world" to the earth, the elders, the highest of heaven's dignitaries, joyously acknowledge that they, too, have been bought by His blood (Un. 5:9). His right to the treasure is based on the prior

right to the field. The deliverance of His saints is His exalted privilege because He is the Owner of the universe.

He alone is worthy! When the messenger proclaimed to a shrinking universe "*Is anyone worthy to open the scroll, and to loose its seals?*" no one in heaven, nor on earth, nor underneath the earth was able to open the scroll or even to look at it. No mere creature could face such a task. The appalling price could not be paid. John lamented much. He knew what was involved. He knew that the seals must be loosed ere Israel could be saved or the world released from the thralldom of the powers of evil.

It is the Lion out of Judah's tribe, the Root of David, Who has the power to break the seals. He is the Man of might, the Root and Fruit of Israel's warrior king. We look for Him in vain beneath the earth in the rock-bound tomb. He is risen! We seek for Him without success among the ranks of men. He is ascended! We do not find Him among the myriads of messengers, or even on the encircling thrones of heaven's highest hosts. Where is the Lion Who will break the seals?

At last we see Him, in the center of the elders, in the center of the animals, in the center of the throne itself—in the very center of the universe! Such is the place supernal which befits His peerless power and regal rank. Only One can occupy the center of God's universe. He alone is worthy!

But what a transformation! There is no Lion there; only a feeble Lambkin, wounded to the death. What a picture of abject weakness! Yet such is the One Who has paid the price of earth's deliverance, and is entitled, as the Lion, to right its wrongs.

Men have been making an effort to right the wrongs of earth. The great war was loudly proclaimed as a deliverance from evils and the harbinger of good. The good has hardly yet materialized, though it cost a sum

so staggering that figures refuse to tell the story. It was as great a material loss as though a mighty cataclysm had destroyed the whole United States. Man has failed.

Far worse than the material loss are the after effects. When God rights the wrongs of earth there will be a thousand years of peace and plenty. There will be complete disarmament. The great war has left many wounds, where it tried to heal one. Conflict after conflict has followed, in all parts of the earth, notwithstanding the federation of the nations, which should put an end to all strife and bloodshed. The causes of friction have been multiplied, instead of the sources of unrest being removed. The war also shattered the world's economic balance. With a plethora of products there is poverty and distress. The war to end war has indeed produced a disarmament conference in which every nation is anxious to renounce the use of such weapons as they find impracticable, but at the same time they are piling up armaments to a degree unknown before. So far as results are concerned, looking at it from the human standpoint, there have been none worth fighting for. Human efforts to set the world right only increase its wrongs. God's judgments will bring about beneficial effects. The material and spiritual sacrifices of the great war were in vain. The peace aimed at has failed of fulfillment, and sums were spent and lives laid down for naught.

Far greater still will be the havoc and far more appalling will be the loss when the seals are loosed and the trumpets sound, and the bowls are poured out in the day of His indignation. But blessed results will follow. The world will not be safe for democracy—which is itself most unsafe—but saved for God. And the secret of His success lies not in His lion-like power alone, but in His utter weakness and defeat on the accursed cross. This is the moral power, the spiritual force, which will so qualify His strange and terrible judgment work, that its effect will be salutary and successful.

Let us, then, imitate the mighty multitude of the heavenly host (for we belong to heaven, too) and join their song of praise:

Worthy is the Lambkin which has been slain
To get power and riches and wisdom and strength
And honor and glory and bliss! (5:12).

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 5:6-14

⁶And I perceived, in the center of the throne and of the four animals and in the center of the elders, a Lambkin standing, as though slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, commissioned for the entire earth. ⁷And It came and has taken it out of the right hand of Him Who is sitting on the throne.

⁸And when It took the scroll, the four animals and the twenty-four elders fall in sight of the Lambkin, each having a lyre and golden bowls brimming with incenses, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹And they are singing a new song, saying,

“Worthy art Thou to be taking the scroll and to open its
seals,

For Thou wast slain and dost buy us for God by Thy
blood.

Out of every tribe and language and people and nation

¹⁰Thou dost also make them a kingdom and a priesthood
for our God,

And they will be reigning on the earth.”

¹¹And I perceived, and I hear a sound as of many messengers around the throne and the animals and the elders, and their number was ten thousands of ten thousands and thousands of thousands, ¹²saying with a loud voice,

*“Worthy is the Lambkin which has been slain
To get power and riches and wisdom and strength
And honor and glory and bliss!”*

¹³And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and underneath the earth and on the sea, and all those in them, I hear saying,

“To Him Who is sitting on the throne—

To the Lambkin—

Be bliss and honor and glory and might

For the eons of the eons!”

¹⁴And the four animals said, “Amen!” And the elders fall and worship.

THE LAMBKIN

TO THE devout student of the Scriptures every character of Christ has a precious quality, which calls for close consideration and quiet meditation. We have seen how the title Christ is itself the key to this Apocalypse, for He appears as the Anointed prophet, potentate and priest. Now our hearts are engaged with Him once more as He is presented to us as a Lambkin.

Instead of being called a Lamb, as heretofore, the diminutive form is used—He is a young Lamb, a Lambkin. This is full of precious significance. A literal lamb, after the lapse of many hundreds of years, would be very old. But the sacrifice of Christ does not become decrepit with age. Rather, it renews its youth. It is fresher than ever. It is incorruptible and potent as long as time shall last.

Serious objection was at first taken to the term “Lambkin” and the use of the neuter pronoun “It” in referring to it. Why not use the name Lamb, as the current versions have done? To those who are spiritual, our reason is both simple and satisfactory. If the Concordant Version had made no other improvement than this in the Unveiling we would consider it worth while. If our aim were to pander to personal prejudice we, too, would have used “Lamb”. But accuracy, consistency, and that deep, underlying principle of language—the

relative value of words, which is so little understood or appreciated—compels us to use “Lambkin”.

Words are like currency. They have no absolute value, but depend entirely on their relation to other words for their efficacy. Now the Concordant Version aims not simply to accord each Greek word its nearest English equivalent, but to so arrange its vocabulary that the relation of its words to one another will correspond to that of the original, and thus preserve the proportions and interrelations of truth. It is of far greater concern that we use terms properly related to the divine vocabulary than to conform to fluctuating modern English.

The word before us is a simple illustration of this principle. A lamb is a young sheep. If the word here used were the only word for a young sheep used in the Scriptures, it might have been admissible to translate it *Lamb*. But there is another word, of which this is the diminutive, which means *lamb*. The task of the translator, then, is not simply to transfer the thought common to these two words, *but to register the distinction between them*. One is a *young* lamb, a lambkin. Otherwise how can he convey the striking contrast in our Lord's commission to Peter after His resurrection? Its pathos and beauty are sadly marred in our version which renders two different word “love” and two “feed”, and translates a second word “lamb”. The Lord did not say “Feed my lambs” and “Feed my sheep”, but “Be grazing My lambkins” and “Be grazing My little sheep” (John 21:15, 17).

Our Lord is called the Lamb of God in the first chapter of John's gospel (verses 29 and 36). He is compared to a lamb in Acts 8:32 and 1 Peter 1:19. Why did not the spirit of God use this word in the Unveiling? *Because it fails to convey the full thought.*

Submission and sacrifice are associated with Him as the Lamb. These are not uppermost in this scroll. It

is gentleness, weakness, utter defenselessness and youth which is suggested by the Lambkin. How sublime is the contrast between the powers of evil and the power of God! A monstrous dragon leads the powers of darkness to defeat, a little Lambkin leads the legions of light to victory. The weakness of God is stronger than the most powerful confederacy of His creatures.

Students who read this scroll attentively will be struck with the fact that, while the Lambkin appears so often on the scene, it is almost always in connection with *blessing*, and not with the execution of the judgments which follow the severing of the seals. It seems to have no part at all in the terrible trumpet trials or the more awful besom of the bowls. How is it that this is all in the hands of messengers, when we have so lately learned that no one was worthy to open the seals but the Lambkin? True, It is alone in the breaking of the seals, but the inflictions that follow, if not providential, come through the mediacy of messengers, or angels, as they are usually termed.

Notwithstanding the fact that the seven eyes of the Lambkin are distinctly stated to be the seven spirits of God, commissioned for the entire land, both the seven horns and the seven eyes are supposed to be a simple intimation of the *fullness* of Its power and intelligence. If this interpretation is true, then it must also be correct in the case of the ten-horned beast (12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12, 16), and the explanation would be, "And the ten horns which you perceived are the fullness of its power . . ." But what we *do* read is that they are *ten kings* (17:12). This should open up to us an entirely new conception of what God intends us to understand by the seven horns and the seven eyes of the Lambkin.

This consideration is full of interest to us in our present inquiry. *The Lambkin is a composite symbol.* It includes more than Christ in Person. It presents Him

and His messengers as incorporated in one animal. He has the seven spirits (3:1). They are His. They join in the benediction which opened the prophetic portion of the book (1:4). They are associated with Him in the work of setting up the kingdom. Spirits are often messengers or angels. The Lambkin opens the seals, but the seven messengers are commissioned to blow the seven trumpets. In His sacrifice Christ was alone, but in the deliverance by power He is accompanied by His holy angels, who are His eyes and His horns of power.

Perhaps the easiest composite symbol for us to grasp is that of the wild beast which has seven heads and ten horns (13:1). Both the heads and the horns are distinctly stated to be *kings* (17:10, 12). The body of the beast, like a leopard, its feet, like a bear, its mouth, like a lion, are probably representative of the governments which are subordinate to it. For our present purpose it is enough to see that this animal brings before our mind a confederacy of kings. This beast will have no literal existence. It is a vision, designed to illustrate the apostasy of the nations at the time of the end.

This is by no means the only composite symbol in this scroll. The dragon (12:3) has seven heads and ten horns each of which is doubtless a distinct power. His tail may well represent his numerous following. He has messengers in his train which battle for him and are cast down with him (12:7-9).

A composite symbol which comes very close to us is the body of Christ. He is not alone in His administration of the celestial realms. His orders are carried into execution through the members of His body. We would not care to be His agents in blowing the trumpets or pouring out the bowls. Such strange work is not for us. We shall school the celestials in the ways of wisdom and in the grandeur of His grace. If, then, He will associate us in a work which is so agreeable to Him, why should

He not delegate His holy messengers to deal out the destruction due His enemies?

And is not this precisely what He has foretold? At the time of the end "the Son of Mankind shall be dispatching His messengers and they shall be culling out of His kingdom all the snares and those doing lawlessness, and they shall be casting them into a furnace of fire" (Mat. 13:41). Again and again, in the course of the judgments, messengers are the means He uses. But we are especially directed to two groups of seven each, one of which blows the trumpets and the other pours out the bowls. May not these be represented by the seven horns and the seven eyes?

After the Lambkin has opened all the seals, John perceived the seven messengers who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them (8:2). Again he sees the seven messengers who have the last seven calamities (15:1). One group sounds the trumpet call to war and calls for *power*. They are the horns. The other group cleanses the land with the bowls of the sanctuary. They are the seven spirits which are commissioned for the entire land. As in the days of Joshua the great priest, they will remove the iniquity of the land (Zech. 3:9).

All of this confirms that sober canon of interpretation which refuses to find a figure in the explanation of a figure. The *seven eyes* are not literal. But the *seven spirits*, which is God's interpretation of the figure, *must be literal*. When God says "*seven . . . which are seven*" no expositor should dare to change it to "*seven . . . which are one*" (Un. 5:6).

When the Lambkin takes the scroll there is a responsive thrill throughout creation, from its center to its circumference. The heavenly choir, composed of the animals and the elders and myriads of messengers, intone their psalm of praise:

Worthy is the Lambkin which has been slain
To get power and riches and wisdom and strength
And honor and glory and bliss!

The response is universal. Every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and underneath the earth and on the sea and all those in them echo back the hymn of hope:

To Him Who is sitting on the throne—
To the Lambkin—
Be bliss and honor and glory and might
For the eons of the eons!

If we concede that the taking of the scroll is the most amazing act in human history—nay, in the chronicles of creation—we should be prepared for a stupendous sensation throughout the universe. Yet where is the expositor who does not ignore or deny this marvelous foretaste of the final issue? Dr. Seiss, in *The Apocalypse*, tells us “There was not a holy heart unmoved, nor a holy tongue that did not lift up its song.”

This he calls a “universal thrill of adoration”. But he has practically taken the word “creature” out of this passage and substituted for it “saint”. How the *saints* will be able to feel a *universal* thrill, especially at the time of the end, when saints will be so scarce on earth, we are not told. Neither can we imagine why saints in the sea and underneath the earth should be specifically included.

If we, too, would adore the Lambkin and apprehend the colossal nature of the task It undertakes at this, the crisis of creation, it will be necessary to banish all such unbelief. Let us allow that there is no limit here, that *every creature* of God’s hand senses and responds to the scene sublime.

Some have supposed that here we have a record of the reconciliation of all, for they could not praise God while at enmity with Him. But this cannot be true, for

at this crisis the estrangement between God and His creatures has reached its climax, and reconciliation is not finally effected for two full eons further on. Yet there is a measure of truth in the mistake. God often gives an earnest or foretaste of the outcome at the beginning. We, who have the spirit of God, have, in minute measure, what will be ours in glory. So, at this turning point in the career of creation, which will come to its consummation in the reconciliation of all, God gives every creature a tiny taste of what He has in store for them.

Of course, the religionist will rant and the rationalist reason that this cannot be. They cannot accept God's great assurance that He will be All in all. Hence they cannot receive this record that every creature will respond, in some degree, to the great change of policy in the government of the universe.

There are those who tell us that God cannot accomplish His purpose to reconcile all to Himself. He cannot override the will of His creatures. This symptomatic sample, at the very beginning of His efforts for all mankind, indicates, not only that He can, but that He will.

Strange as it may seem, this passage, instead of proving God's power and promising His purpose to reconcile all creatures to Himself, has been made the basis of an argument to disprove it. As this is put into excellent form by the devout student who is its author, we will copy it here. Unlike others who ignore or deny the universal terms here used, this critic claims this to be the only place in all the Scriptures which is actually broad enough to include all. It is also a good example of the rationalistic method which seeks to reason away such revelations as are not confined within the creeds and confessions of apostate Christendom. First we will show the unreasonableness of the argument and then point out a better way to test the validity of our faith.

UNIVERSAL RECONCILIATION

Those who believe in the final salvation of every lost being in the universe, usually fall back on three texts to try to prove their doctrine. These are Colossians 1:20, Philippians 2:10, Revelation 5:13. But do these texts teach that all the lost are finally saved? Let us diagram and number them thus:

No. 1	No. 2	No. 3
Colossians 1:20	Philippians 2:10	Revelation 5:13
Heaven	Heaven	Heaven
Earth	Earth	Earth
	Under the Earth	Under the Earth Sea

Number 1 speaks of the *reconciliation* of things in heaven and earth. The *things* in *two places* are *reconciled*.

Number 2 speaks of the *confession* of those in heaven, earth, under earth. Those in *three places* *bow* and *confess* that Jesus is Lord.

Number 3 speaks of the *praise* of those in heaven, earth, under earth, sea. Those in *four places* give *praise* by saying: "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

Now Number 1 may teach salvation, but the two classes of which it speaks do not include *all*; for when the Lord would include all He adds two more classes as in Number 3. So that counts Number 1 out.

Number 2 has more classes than Number 1, but not the four classes of Number 3. Thus Number 2 is not broad enough to include *all*. But even if it did include all it does not speak of *salvation*. It simply says that its three classes *bow* and *confess* Him Lord. This does not mean salvation for them, for we read in Matthew 7:21-23, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not . . . in thy name done many wonderful works?" And He will say to them: 'Depart from me'. 'I never knew you'." John 18:6 tells us that those who came to arrest Jesus "went backward, and fell to the ground" when He told them who He was; and the Lord can just as easily make others bow before Him. Certainly the saved will do this willingly, but the time will come when the three classes mentioned in Phil. 2:10 will do it whether willingly or unwillingly. Thus bowing and confessing Him Lord does not of itself imply salvation. Number 2 does not teach universal salvation.

Number 3 has four classes, and is perhaps broad enough to include all, but it does not speak of either reconciliation or salvation, but only of ascribing blessing, honor, glory, and power unto the Lamb. One who does this is not necessarily saved, for demons praised Him saying He was the Holy One

of God. They submitted to Him, and, in the person of one possessed, bowed to Him, and acknowledged Him as their Judge; and at that time at least they were not saved. Thus Number 3 does not teach universal salvation.

We may sum up these three texts thus: Number 1 may speak of salvation, but is not broad enough to include all. Number 2, and Number 3 may include all but do not speak of salvation.

Before examining the premises of this argument we will take it to be true, and see where it leads us. First, as to creation. In the beginning God created only the heavens and the earth. The sea and the subterranean regions are not included. Another creator must be responsible for their existence (Gen. 1:1)! The Son created only a part of the universe, notwithstanding the fact that "all came into being through Him, and apart from Him not one thing came into being" (Jn. 1:3). His creation was confined to heaven and earth (Col. 1:16)! God is Lord only of heaven and earth (Mat. 11:25)! All power in heaven and on earth is given to Christ (Mat. 28:18) but He will have no jurisdiction over anything beneath the soil or on the sea! In the final eon His headship will be likewise confined (Eph. 1:10! Why, in this very chapter, the search for one to open the seals was not thorough, for the sea was not included (5:3)! When heaven and earth pass away (Mat. 5:18; 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 16:17; 21:33; 2 Pet. 3:5-13; Un. 20:11) the sea and the subterranean regions will remain!

Now that we see where this reasoning leads we are prepared to examine more closely the basis on which it is built. The chief foundation stone of this argument is this, that all things continue as they have been from the creation, and will so continue till the end. There is no recognition of the great change God has brought about since creation.

In Colossians we have creation as it was in the beginning, and reconciliation as it will be at the consumma-

tion. Why are the sea and the underworld omitted? *Because there was no sea and no underworld in the beginning and there will be none at the consummation.* The sea is the result of the cataclysm of Genesis 1:2. It will pass away in the new creation. True reasoning would take account of these facts. What is true at one time is false at another. How foolish it would be to one acquainted with the truth to open the record of revelation thus: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and the sea and the subterranean regions!" The latter two, as such, were not there. Neither will they be present at the end, and I would have no hesitation in condemning any attempt to include them in the reconciliation of all at that time.

Philippians and Revelation do not deal with the first earth or with the final state. Hence, in the Unveiling, where the sea and the subterranean regions are prominent factors, and where we would be strongly inclined to omit the creatures in them, they are specifically mentioned. The action takes place while they exist.

In Philippians the sea is omitted because, at the special time which is in view, the new creation, there will be no sea.

Let no one deduce from this that the sea and the subterranean regions are excluded whenever the present "heaven and earth" are referred to. The whole passage in the third of second Peter is a protest against this. Neither the sea nor the subterranean regions are mentioned, yet no one can exclude them. This is confirmed by the twentieth chapter of the Unveiling. Only heaven and earth are said to pass away. It is quite unnecessary to add the details for no one can question them without becoming questionable.

Unless driven to it in order to find an argument against the truth, no one would even question what is so apparent in every passage, that "the heavens and the

earth'' are used by the spirit of God to include all creation. Blot the reconciliation of all from your mind for a moment, and imagine what all true believers would think of a teacher who "proved" in this way from Gen. 1:1 that God created only a part of the universe! If God *created* all then He will *reconcile* all, for exactly the same terms are used. You cannot destroy God's consummation without demolishing His creation.

It is unnecessary to go into the other details. The praise of Revelation does not necessarily include salvation. The bowing and "confessing" of Philippians assuredly lead to it, yet it is certainly *not* the universal reconciliation, for it takes place while Christ is Lord. The reconciliation comes long after, at His voluntary abdication. A great teacher once read Col. 1:20: "by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself." Commenting on it he said: "*There are some people who actually believe this as it stands!*" He then "explained" it. God grant that we may be silly enough to "believe it as it stands!"

There is another explanation of this passage which has early evidence to commend it. We present the matter in the words of our esteemed friend, Alexander Thomson:

"The difficulty is that here we have a universal ascription of praise taking place *during the eons*. The teaching of other Scriptures is that this occurs only at the termination of the eons. Or, if Philippians 2:9-11 is fulfilled during the eons, it seems to happen just at the end of them. It seems more in keeping with the apparent will of God that a scene such as this should be reserved for the great goal God is striving after.

"Verse thirteen can hardly be accepted as expressing anything less than absolute universality. Thus, Kalamos, in 'Prophetical Suggestions', writes: 'The last two verses of Rev. v. convey a meaning which seems to be but little understood and appreciated by readers generally.

These verses record the doxology of the universal creation.

“Understood in the fullest sense, the words so clearly teach the doctrine—so dear to the heart of Saint Paul—that a time is coming when the entire universe *and all things therein existing at that time* shall be fully reconciled to God, that those theologians whose prejudices are opposed to such a doctrine must of necessity try to minimize the meaning.

“Let the reader carefully study the opening words of verse thirteen, and ask his own conscience and common sense if it is honestly possible to read into these words any meaning *less than that of universality*: ‘Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in [or *on*] the sea, and all that are in them.’ The inspired writer exhausts all the ideas of universality known to the age in which he lived, in order to express the vastness of the meaning.’

“Nevertheless, this verse cannot speak of salvation or reconciliation. The time for these has not arrived.

“If the present reading be allowed, the action must be in a manner subconscious, as in 11:13. When the city experiences the shock of the earthquake, and seven thousand human beings are killed thereby, ‘the rest become affrighted, and give glory to the God of heaven.’ The same thing would occur today during an earthquake or any death-dealing outburst of the awesome power of nature. The natural instinct is to ascribe the glory or awfulness of the event to God, even although He be but the distant ‘God of heaven’.

“That the praise of all creation in Unveiling 5:13 seems to be consciously spontaneous seems indicated by the fact that the four animals approve and corroborate by their ‘Amen!’ while the elders prostrate and worship.

“Some other explanation of the passage should be sought. Does such exist?

“The Greek Text of verse thirteen adopted by most

editors, including Weymouth and Nestlé and Souter, is as follows: *Kai pan ktisma ho en tō ouranō kai epī tēs gês kai hupokatō tēs gês kai epī tēs thalassês (estin) kai ta en autois panta, êkousa legontas, . . .*

“The Greek Text of verses 9-10 and 13-14 contains a few uncertainties and minor problems, but the only various readings in verse thirteen which are of any special importance to us at the present juncture are:

“For *êkousa*, ‘I hear,’ Tischendorf and the Bale Edition and the CONCORDANT VERSION have *kai êkousa*, ‘and I hear,’ in company with Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus (‘b’, No. 2066). The Bale Edition margin omits the ‘and’.

“For *legontas*, ‘saying,’ (plural, *masc. accus.*) Codex Alexandrinus, with a few other MSS. and versions, has *legonta* (plural, *neuter*, *nom.* or *accus.*) while Westcott & Hort and the Bale Edition have this spelling in their margin.

“*Panta* is ‘all’, plural, *neuter*, *nom.* or *accus.* *Pantas* would be plural, *masc. accus.* In place of *panta*, Alford prefers *pentas*, with the support of quite a few cursive MSS., including the following of Scrivener’s, a b d e h j l, the Vulgate, and a few patristic quotations. The Vatican Codex (‘b’) has the combined reading, *panta kai pentas* (‘all [*neut.*] and all [*masc.*]’). MS. No. 40 reads *panta ta en autois pentas*, ‘all those [*neut.*] in them all [*masc.*]’ The following MSS. have *kai pentas*: f, n, 13, 47. Some have *pentas kai êkousa*, including k, m, 30-4-5-6.

“The proper reading the Greek originally exhibited may have been: *Kai ta en autois panta. Kai pentas êkousa legontas . . .* ‘And all [plural, *neuter*] those in them. And I hear all [plural, *masc.*] saying . . .’

“Or the second ‘all’ might have been omitted, thus reading: ‘And all those in them. And I hear [them, *masc.*] saying . . .’

“If the reading *legontas* be accepted, it is remarkable

that only here is the neuter gender departed from, and a masculine preferred.

“The key to the meaning of the passage is perhaps contained in the ancient Syriac Version, the earliest of all translations. It reads as follows:

¹² *Do'mrin b'qolo' rabo': Dshoqe' 'itavi 'Emro'*
 Saying with-voice loud: Worthy is Lamb
hav nkiso' l'mesab khailo' v'ghutro' v'khekmta'
 that slain to-get power and-riches and-wisdom
v'ghushno' vi'goro' v'teshbukhto' v'burkto' ¹³ v'kul
 and-strength and-honor and-glory and-blessing and-
brito' hoi diyiteh bashmayo' v'ghal 'argho'
 every creature which is in-heaven and-on earth
v'altakht men 'argho' v'abyamo' v'kulhein holein
 and-under from earth and-in-the-sea and-all those
dabhun.

which-in-them.

V'shemghet l'hav d'yoteb ghal tronos do'mar
 And-I-hear Him that-sits upon throne Who-says
l'Emro' tetiheb burkto' vi'goro' v'teshbukhto'
 to-Lamb let-be-given blessing and-honor and-glory
v'ukhdono' l'gholme' d'gholme'.
 and-might for-eons of-eons.

“The translation would, therefore, be:

“Saying with a loud voice: ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to get power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing and every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and in the sea and all those that are in these.’ [full stop].

And I hear Him that is sitting upon the throne saying: ‘To the Lamb let there be given blessing and honor and glory and power for the eons of the eons.’”

“The last sentence appears to have been confused by the copyists, but the Syriac Version is probably correct in coupling on verse thirteen to verse twelve. In this case the speakers in verse thirteen would be the angels, or messengers, of verse eleven, who surround the throne, the animals and the elders. *Legontas* would then agree

with 'messengers', which is also masculine. Otherwise the word *legontas* instead of *legonta* seems inexplicable, as is the break in verse thirteen before the word *kai*, 'and'.

"If this explanation be true, the messengers in verse twelve say the Lamb is *worthy* to get certain honors, while in verse thirteen they ascribe these honors to Him directly.

"Not only is the Lamb worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and bliss, but He is justly entitled to claim as His own *every creature* in the universe. As has been stated in previous chapters, pages 165 and 190, 'He has bought the whole creation and paid for it by His blood,' and 'His blood . . . suffices, not only to redeem His own, but to *buy* the whole creation.'

"As a reward for His lone combat on earth with the forces of evil, His abject poverty, His self-limitations, His weakness, His abasement and humiliation, His becoming as the off-scouring of the universe, His laying aside of all reputation, the Son of God is entitled to the attributes of verse twelve.

"By His blood, however, He has paid in full for every creature in all God's realms.

"In chapter 4:11, God is worthy to get 'glory and honor and power;

For the universe *Thou* dost create,
It was and was created because of Thy will.'

"As Creator He is worthy, but now, chapter 5:13, as the Lamb of God the Son is worthy to obtain the entire universe of creaturedom.

"It is too severe a tax on one's credulity to assert that the Lamb will receive honor and glory and might, etc., just because He is worthy, yet to disbelieve that He will get 'every creature', of which He is equally worthy. We cannot imagine anything being withheld from the

Son of God which the Word of God says He is 'worthy' to receive.

"The entire universe will revert to Him. All creatures are really His, but will again become His in the bonds of an indissoluble affection. Is He worthy of anything less?

"If it be objected that the second half of verse thirteen cannot be another shout of praise by the messengers alone, following so closely after their ascription in verse twelve, or if it be objected that it cannot be by all three companies of heavenly beings mentioned (animals, elders, messengers), in any case these three companies are all included in the 'every creature'. In other words, is the ascription in the latter half of verse thirteen by—

1. The entire universe of created beings,
2. The four animals, the twenty-four elders, and the myriads of messengers, or by
3. *All* the messengers (only) ?

"No. 1 seems incompatible with other Scriptures, and foreign to the sense of this passage. Nos. 2 and 3 are both likely and reasonable. No. 3 is most likely, when compared with chapter 7:11, where

'all the messengers stood around the throne and the elders and the four animals. And they fall on their faces before the throne, and worship God, saying:

"Amen! The bliss and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be our God's for the eons of the eons. Amen!"

"Of the seven ascriptions in chapters 4-7 by companies to the Throne-Sitter or the Lambkin, two refer to the Priest Nation, and these two alone, out of the seven, have no mention of honor, glory, bliss, etc.

"The former, 5:9-10, is *about* human beings (the priest nation), and the latter, 7:9-10, is *by* human beings (a vast countless throng, apparently of saved Israelites). Both companies are out of every tribe, language, people, and nation.

“If chapter 5:13 is an ascription by the messengers, then all the five ascriptions of honor, glory, bliss, etc. are by *heavenly* beings.

“Only two of the ascriptions refer to ‘the eons of the eons’. These are 7:11, by ‘all the messengers’, and 5:13 by ‘all’ (the messengers,). (In chapter 4:9, the Throne Sitter ‘*lives* for the eons of the eons’, but this is not an ascription *for* the eons.)

“If the above view be correct, we would have in chapter five the Lambkin and the throne, surrounded by the four animals and the twenty-four elders. Around all these is an enormous host of messengers, thus:

8-10	{	Animals
		Elders
11-12		Many messengers
13		All (messengers)
14	{	Animals
		Elders

“It is admitted that the above exegesis is not free from difficulties, or wholly satisfactory, but it is put forward for candid consideration. The Old Syriac may be correct after all, in its unique and bold reading.”

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 6:1-8

6 And I perceived when the Lambkin opens one of the seven seals; and I hear one of the four animals saying, as with a voice of thunder, "*Come!*"

²And I perceived, and *lo!* a white horse, and he who is sitting on it has a bow, and to him was given a wreath. And he came forth conquering and that he should be conquering.

³And when It opens the second seal, I hear the second animal saying, "*Come!*" ⁴And another horse, fiery red, came forth, and it was given to him who is sitting on it to take peace out of the earth, and that they should be slaying one another. And a huge sword was given to him.

⁵And when It opens the third seal, I hear the third animal saying, "*Come!*" And I perceived and *lo!* a black horse, and he who is sitting on it has a pair of balances in his hand. ⁶And I hear as it were a voice in the midst of the four animals saying, "A chenix [$1\frac{1}{2}$ pints] of wheat a denarius [15.7c, 7d 3f], and three chenix of barley a denarius—and you should not be injuring the olive oil and the wine!"

⁷And when It opens the fourth seal, I hear the voice of the fourth animal saying, "*Come!*" ⁸And I perceived, and *lo!* a greenish horse, and the name of him who is sitting upon it is Death, and the Unseen followed him, and jurisdiction was given them over a fourth of the earth to kill with the saber and with famine and with the plague and by the wild beasts of the earth.

THE FOUR HORSEMEN

THE political deliverance of the earth is seen under the seven seals and the seven trumpets and the seven thunders. The throne vision which we have been viewing is a general prelude to these judgments, and is a special introduction to the seven seals.

The seven trumpets are included in the seventh seal, so that the seals cover the entire judgment period up to the actual visible appearing of the Lord Himself on the clouds of heaven, and the establishment of His kingdom over all the earth. The length of this era seems to be seven years. The central point in this period, three and a half years, or forty-two months, or twelve hundred sixty days from the end, is the greatest crisis in the history of the earth. True, the judgment begins half a heptad before, and continues half a heptad beyond, but the center of the period stands forth as the highest point of human apostasy and the transition from "providential" judgments to divine inflictions.

The covenant of Daniel 9:27 is ratified for this "week" or heptad, and in the "midst of the week" the covenant is broken and active hostilities commence between the kingdoms of the world and the people of God. There is, perhaps, no better vantage point from which to view the events of the end time than the middle of the heptad. We have drawn a dotted line across the chart to indicate its importance. Almost all of the action in the Unveiling is found in the second half of the heptad. The last three seals, the trumpets, the

thunders and the bowls all find their place in the last three and one-half years. In contrast to this, the four horsemen bring before us introductory and providential judgments during the first half of the heptad. Consequently we cannot identify these judgments with any others in this apocalypse. They are, however, the very same as those foretold by our Lord Himself, during His earthly ministry.

The best commentary that we are aware of on the seven seals is found in the synoptic gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke give us an account of our Lord's predictions concerning the end time which are in exact accord with these seven seals. To simplify a comparison of His utterances with the record of the breaking of the seals we have arranged them in parallel columns so that the four accounts are next to one another.

The symbol of horsemen is a strange one to Western minds. We associate horses with useful labor and speedy transportation, but the Eastern mind associated the horse and his rider with war. For this we have the special term "cavalry". The wise man says "The horse is prepared against the day of battle" (Prov. 21:31). Pharaoh had horses. Many were drowned in the Red Sea at the exodus. But the kings of Israel were warned not to multiply horses (Deut. 17:16). The ox and the ass did the useful labor in Palestine, but the horses were held for destruction and devastation, for the conflict and carnage of opposing hosts. Translated into literal language, the four horses and their riders present a picture of God's first inflictions in His controversy with mankind. Swift, powerful, irresistible ruin is visited on rebellious man.

It is notable that the elders take no part in these judgments. The animals, as the representatives of the sphere which is attacked, give the order, *Come!* The

horses, too, are animals, and may well convey the impression of judgment by natural, or, as we say, "providential" means. The inflictions which follow their charge are exceptional only in their vast scope and intensity. Conquest, war, famine and pestilence, have often devastated portions of mankind. The great war was and is mistaken for a fulfillment of this vision. It was called a "world war", but it actually included only a portion of mankind. The war here foretold will involve the whole earth. Nation will rise against nation. Conscription will be universal. Not only will the fighting be fearful, but the famine and pestilence which follow will be frightful. No nation will be able to assist another, as in the war just past, but each will be unable to cope with even its own conditions.

The warfare indicated under the four horsemen seems to have the effect of transforming the four beasts of Daniel into the single equivalent of the Unveiling. It is the last great struggle between the East and the West. It is the conflict between apostate Christendom and the orient. The divine diplomacy sets the kingdoms of the earth against each other so that they become His whip for their chastisement. The judgments are inflicted by man upon man. No signs are seen in heaven. No quake convulses the earth. God hides behind His providence.

With the parallel passages of Matthew, Mark and Luke to guide us, we cannot go astray in our interpretation of the white horse rider. He is the false christ who shall come. It seems incredible that anyone should be misled into believing that this is the true Christ having the conquests of the gospel. Yet such, we are told, is the accepted interpretation. Christ is here, not as the rider of the white horse, but as the Lambkin. When He does appear He comes on a white horse (19:11).

THE OPENING OF

Matthew 24

⁴ Beware that no one should be deceiving you! ⁵ For many shall be coming on My name, saying, 'I am the Christ!' and shall be deceiving many.

Mark 13

⁶ Beware that no one should be deceiving you! For many will be coming on My name, saying that 'I am!' and they will be deceiving many.

But that is at the close of this judgment period immediately before the kingdom is set up. The white horse rider of the first seal is an imitation of the true, conquering the nations to unite them against God, though leading them to believe that he is the man of destiny who is able to solve humanity's problems and bring in the longed for millennium.

As the horses are of various colors, we should be careful to inquire into the significance of each. Red for war, black for famine, and sallow green for pestilence need no further explanation. But why is the first horse white? A white animal was reserved for a noble personage or a special occasion. Kings and princes rode on white asses. The bridegroom was honored by a white mount in his wedding procession.

When the true white horse Rider comes He is followed by the cavalry of heaven on white horses (Un. 19:14). Hence we may conclude that the rider is the great Cæsar of the end time, the highest of human potentates, fitly mounted to accord with his exalted rank.

THE OPENING OF

Matthew 24

⁶ Yet you shall be about to be hearing battles, and tidings of battles. See that you are not alarmed, for it must be occurring, but not as yet is the consummation. ⁷ For nation shall be roused against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,

Mark 13

⁷ Now whenever you should be hearing battles and tidings of battles, see that you are not alarmed, for it must be occurring, but not as yet is the consummation. ⁸ For nation will be roused against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

THE FIRST SEAL

Luke 21

⁸ Beware! You should not be deceived, for many shall be coming on My name, saying that 'I am!' and 'The season has drawn near!' You should not, then, be going after them.

Unveiling 6

² And I perceived, and lo! a white horse, and he who is sitting on it has a bow, and to him was given a wreath. And he came forth conquering and that he should be conquering.

His "crown", however, is not the hereditary insignia of royalty, but the wreath or chaplet accorded to the victor in the games. He has gained his place by some exploit, and his rank has been won by his own efforts. It is conquest which acclaims him the dictator of Christendom. This supremacy he uses for still further aggression. At the time of the vision he is the conquering head of the beast seen by Daniel. "That he should be conquering" suggests the struggle against the lion and the leopard and the bear. He vanquishes these and organizes the great nondescript, the wild beast which comes before us in the religious section of the Unveiling (13:1-3).

This interpretation throws light upon his only weapon of offense, a bow, which may well stand for distant warfare. His military campaigns, carried on by modern means, will be executed with the swift celerity of an arrow. He will attack the most distant realms with little regard for space or time.

THE SECOND SEAL

Luke 21

⁹ Now, whenever you should be hearing battles and turbulences, you should not be dismayed, for these things must occur first, but not immediately is the consummation. ¹⁰ Then He said to them, "Nation shall be roused against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

Unveiling 6

³ And when It opens the second seal, I hear the second animal saying, "Come!" ⁴ And another horse, fiery red, came forth, and it was given to him who is sitting on it to take peace out of the earth, and that they should be slaying one another. And a huge sword was given to him.

THE OPENING OF

Matthew 24

and there shall be famines
and quakes in places.

Mark 13

And there will be quakes in
places. And there will be fam-
ines and disturbances. These
are the beginning of travails.

Perhaps we should enlarge our interpretation to include the spirit of which he is the embodiment. None of the other horsemen are actual individuals. Our Lord refers only to the things which they represent. Corresponding to the white horse rider He warns against many false messiahs. So that the confederation of Christendom to force the millennium upon the heathen may well be included within the scope of this vision.

The red horse rider is war. A premonition of what may be expected has been given us during the great war. Since the opening of that conflict we have been hearing of battles and rumors of battles. Blood has flowed freely. Peace has disappeared, and is tardy in returning, even long after the armed conflict has ceased and the treaties have been ratified. When this war comes, the "great war" will be viewed as a preliminary skirmish, a preparation for the appalling strife of nations.

War was followed by famine. The price of food-stuffs rose to twice and thrice their normal value, even in countries remote from the center of operations.

To understand the real severity of the famine we must not measure the cost of wheat by our currency,

THE OPENING OF

Matthew 24

[*and pestilences* is omitted
by most of the mss. and edi-
tors.]

Mark 13

THE THIRD SEAL

Luke 21

¹¹ Besides, in places, there will be great quakes and famines.

Unveiling 6

And I perceived and *lo!* a black horse, and he who is sitting on it has a pair of balances in his hand. ⁶ And I hear as it were a voice in the midst of the four animals saying: "A chenix [$1\frac{1}{2}$ pints] of wheat, a denarius [15.7ϕ , $7d\ 3f$], and three chenix of barley a denarius—and you should not be injuring the olive oil and the wine!"

but by its relation to labor. Our Lord considered a denarius a day's wage (Mat. 20:9-11). A chenix was a day's ration for a slave. So that all a man will be able to do will be to earn food for himself, if he has work, with nothing to spare for his dependents, or for shelter. The usual price of a chenix of wheat was about one-eighth of a denarius, though sometimes it was much less. Hence provisions will be eight times their normal price at least. Those of us who were paying double for some supplies during the war will be able to realize, in some measure, how terrible this affliction will be. Interpreters have searched in the annals of the past for such a season of scarcity, but have never been able to find one. So they have resorted to various devious methods to scale down its severity. But there never has been such a time, neither shall there be any after this judgment season. The word here rendered "bal-

THE FOURTH SEAL

Luke 21

and pestilences.

³ And I perceived, and *lo!* a green horse, and the name of him who is sitting upon it is Death, and the Unseen followed him, and jurisdiction was given them over a fourth of the earth to kill with the saber and with famine and with the plague and by the wild beasts of the earth.

ances'' is the Greek word for *yoke*. A yoke and a balance are so similar that a yoke might be made to do duty as a balance. In the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures *zugos* represents two distinct Hebrew words, one of which means *yoke*, and the other *balance*. Hence it has both meanings. The latter is far preferable in this connection.

Olive oil and wine and grain formed the staple diet of ancient Palestine. There was nothing else to take their place. Put them beyond the reach of the common people, and hunger, emaciation, disease, and death are sure to follow. Famine and pestilence are the aftermath of war. Soldiers are withdrawn from the cultivation of the soil, crops are devastated, food is destroyed, and the fighting men must be well fed, hence famine follows fast in the footsteps of the awful conflict of the future.

The sickly greenish horse, with Death in the saddle, completes the work of the four horsemen. The plague follows the famine. By contrast, happy is he who dies by the sword, for his misery is soon over. And better to die by the famine than to be tortured by the pitiless plague. Even the wild beasts will be ravenous and assuage the pangs of hunger with human flesh.

The terrible extent of these inflictions may be imagined when a fourth of mankind succumbs to its ravages. Counting the earth's population at a billion, this would wipe out two hundred and fifty million persons within the short space of three and a half years. For the same period, during the late war, about ten millions died of the fighting and the famine and the plague. Severe as this seemed, how much more appalling will it be when twenty-five times as many die in the coming conflict! The war took a toll of about eight thousand each day, or about one every ten seconds. Then there will be five ghastly corpses every two seconds. Every day will

swallow up two hundred thousand victims. Yet all this is but the beginning of travails! (Mat. 24:8).

This is but the prelude to the great tragedy. The character of these judgments is such that God is hidden from view. His hand is not apparent. The inflictions follow one another in their natural order, as they have always done in the past. Man still seems to be the maker of his own misfortunes. It is, indeed, his last great effort. So the substitute messiah seeks to usher in his millenium. And all must acknowledge that the world is in a mood to receive him. The engines of destruction are ready for his use. The East is rising against the West. On every hand there is increasing preparation. Almost all are convinced that another war is inevitable. The world is waiting for the great White Horse Conqueror.

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The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 6:9-11

⁹And when It opens the fifth seal, I perceived underneath the altar the souls of those who have been slain because of the word of God and because of the testimony which they had. ¹⁰And they cry with a loud voice, saying: "*Till when, O Owner, holy and true, art Thou not judging and avenging our blood on those who are dwelling on the earth?*" ¹¹And to each of them was given a white robe, and it was declared to them that they should be resting still a little time, till their fellowslaves, also, and their brethren, who are about to be killed as they also were, should be completing them.

THE SOULS UNDER THE ALTAR

WE now stand upon the highest peak in the great divide of divine prophecy. Behind us lies the shadowy scene of human sin and misgovernment and alienation from God. Some distance ahead we can see smiling plains brightened by the beams of divine mercy, the longed-for millennium. But, before we reach that restful haven, we encounter the most terrific storm earth has ever known. Thunder and lightning, blood and fire, heaven and earth, man and Satan, all conspire to wreck and ruin the human race. Directly in the center of the tornado's path are the saints of the Circumcision whose lot will be cast in the time of the end.

Judgment is God's strange work. He always hurries through it and He condescends to explain the motive that prompts Him to it. Just as the storm is the relief of nature's strained elements, so judgment follows the pent-up impulses of mercy. What cannot be cured by kindness, must be corrected by coercion. Love demands that such measures should be swift, severe, and sudden. Grace lingers long. For nearly two millenniums it has swayed its sweet scepter over man. It is like the sun's beneficent beams. Judgment is the lightning flash, which is gone before its thunderous reverberations reach the ear.

Redemption is by blood and by power. Israel was sheltered by the sacrificial lamb from the death stroke of Jehovah's messenger and from the Egyptians by the overwhelming waters of the Red Sea. This was but a feeble type of the true Passover Lamb that was slain on

Matthew 24

⁹ Then shall they be giving you up to affliction, and they shall be killing you, and you shall be hated by all of the nations because of My name. ¹⁰ And then many shall be snared, and they shall be betraying one another and hating one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets shall be roused, and shall be deceiving many. ¹² And, because of the multiplication of lawlessness, the love of many shall be cooling. ¹³ Yet he who endures to the consummation, *he* shall be saved. ¹⁴ And this evangel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony to all the nations, and then the consummation shall be arriving.

¹⁵ Whenever, then, you may be perceiving the abomination of desolation, which is declared through Daniel, the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him who is reading apprehend), ¹⁶ then let those in Judea be fleeing into the mountains. ¹⁷ Let not him who is on the housetop be descending to pick up aught out of his house. ¹⁸ And let not him who is in the field turn back behind to pick up his cloak.

¹⁹ Now woe to those who are pregnant and suckling in those days! ²⁰ Now be praying that your flight may not be occurring in winter, nor yet on a sabbath, ²¹ for then shall be great affliction, such as has not occurred from the beginning of the world till now, neither under any circumstances may be occurring. ²² And except

(Continued in last column)

Mark 13

⁹ Yet *you* be looking to yourselves. For they will be betraying you to the sanhedrins and you will be lashed in synagogues, and yet you will stand before governors and kings on My account, for a testimony to them. ¹⁰ And the evangel must first be proclaimed to all nations.

¹¹ And whenever they may be leading you to betrayal, do not worry beforehand what you should be speaking, neither be meditating, but whatever may be given to you in that hour, this be speaking, for it is not *you* who are speaking, but the holy spirit. ¹² And brother will be betraying brother to death, and father, child. And children will be rising against parents, and will be causing them to die. ¹³ And you will be hated by all because of My name. Yet he who endures to the consummation, *he* shall be saved.

¹⁴ Now whenever you may be perceiving the abomination of desolation, which is declared by Daniel the prophet, standing where it must not (let him who is reading apprehend), then let those in Judea be fleeing into the mountains. ¹⁵ Now let not him who is on the housetop descend into the house, neither let him enter to pick up anything out of his house. ¹⁶ And let not him who is in the field turn back to that behind, to pick up his cloak.

¹⁷ Now woe to those who are pregnant and suckling in those days! ¹⁸ Yet be praying that your flight may not be occurring in winter, ¹⁹ for those days will be affliction, such as

(Continued on page 226)

Luke 21

¹² Yet before all these things they will be laying their hands on you and they will be persecuting [you], giving you up into the synagogues and jails, being led off to kings and governors on account of My name.

¹³ Yet it will be eventuating to you for a testimony. ¹⁴ Ponder, then, in your hearts not to be premeditating a defense, ¹⁵ for I will be giving you a mouth and wisdom, which all who are opposing you will not be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶ Yet you will be betrayed also by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will be causing some of you to die. ¹⁷ And you will be hated by all because of My name. ¹⁸ And a hair of your head should by no means perish. ¹⁹ By your endurance you shall be acquiring your souls.

²⁰ Now whenever you may be perceiving Jerusalem surrounded by encampments, then know that her desolation has drawn near. ²¹ Then let those in Judea be fleeing into the mountains, and let those in her midst be coming out into the country, and let not those in the country be entering into her, ²² seeing that these are the days of vengeance, to fulfill all that has been written. ²³ Yet woe to those who are pregnant, and to those suckling in those days; for there will be great necessity in the land and indignation on this people.

²⁴ And they shall be falling by the edge of the sword and shall be led into captivity into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden by the nations until the eras of the nations may be fulfilled.

Unveiling 6

"And when It opens the fifth seal, I perceived underneath the altar the souls of those who have been slain because of the word of God and because of the testimony which they had. ¹⁰ And they cry with a loud voice, saying: "*Till when, O Owner, holy and true, art Thou not judging and avenging our blood on those who are dwelling on the earth?*" ¹¹ And to each of them was given a white robe, and it was declared to them that they should be resting still a little time, till their fellow-slaves, also, and their brethren, who are about to be killed as they also were, should be completing them.

Matthew 24, continued

those days were discounted, no flesh at all would be saved, yet because of those who are chosen, those days shall be discounted.

²³ Then, if anyone should be saying to you, '*Lo! Here is Christ!*' or '*Here!*' you should not be believing it. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets shall be roused, and they shall be giving great signs and miracles, so as to deceive, if possible, even the chosen. ²⁵ *Lo!* I have declared it to you beforehand.

²⁶ If, then, they should be saying to you, '*Lo! He is in the wilderness!*' you may not be coming out, '*Lo! in the closets!*' you should not be believing it. ²⁷ For even as the lightning is coming out of the east and is appearing as far as the west, thus shall be the presence of the Son of Mankind. ²⁸ Wherever the corpse may be, there will the vultures be gathered.

Mark 13, *continued*
has not occurred from the beginning of the creation which God creates till now, and under no circumstances may be occurring. ²⁰And, except the

Lord discounts the days, no flesh at all would be saved. But because of the chosen whom He chooses, He discounts the days.

Golgotha and of the fearful judgments which will engulf the world when Israel's deliverance draws near.

Just as the central object in the great judgment of the past is a lonely cross and a bleeding Victim, so the judgment of the future centers our attention on an altar. The immediate cause of earth's woes is the cry of the martyrs for vengeance. What a mighty contrast between the One Who prayed "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!" and the cry of those under the altar, calling for judgment on their persecutors! The answer to the cry of Christ has stayed judgment for nearly twenty centuries. The petition of the saints will bring swift vengeance for thirty months.

It is important to understand the character of these judgments. When the kingdom is set up all nations will be summoned before the Son of Mankind for trial. Their sentence will not be based on their personal sins but upon their attitude toward God's people Israel. When the most terrible persecution visits God's earthly people, the Jews, it becomes the test of righteousness. Those who succor them are blessed with them. Those who do them no favor are judged accordingly. Those who oppress and slay them will perish in the previous visitations. The act that provokes the most terrible afflictions that earth shall ever see, is a gigantic outburst of anti-Semitism, the so-called *Juden-hetze*, but directed especially against those of the nation who are true to Jehovah and His Christ at the time of the end.

We may rest assured that none of the saints of this day of grace are included in this company. This is not a day for vengeance, but grace. Now a martyr should pray for his enemies, and implore for his persecu-

tors. Then all will be changed. Grace will retire. Justice will unsheathe its sword. Israel's saints will call for vengeance.

Perhaps no one seriously considers this scene a literal one. A large cavern is still shown under the site of the ancient altar on Mount Moriah where the blood of the sacrifices was poured. But no one would deem it a great boon to be thrust into such a reeking receptacle as a reward for martyrdom! It would be worse than death itself. It is an undoubted figure of speech. As our understanding of this great crisis depends on a clear grasp of its significance, we shall seek to unfold it fully.

First we must correct the misleading translations which connect *life* with the *blood*. Life, in the original Scriptures, is never connected with the blood, but with the spirit. It is the *soul* which is associated with the blood. Leviticus 17:11 should read, "For the soul of the flesh, it is in the blood: and *I* give it to you on the altar to make a propitiation for your souls: for it is the blood which is making propitiation for the soul." If we connect this with the fact that the blood of the sin-offering was poured out at the bottom of the altar (Lev. 4:7, 18) we have the key to the whole scene in the Unveiling.

There were seven great festivals every year in Israel. These form a prophetic outline of the nation's spiritual history. We give a list, together with the month and the day on which they were observed, and also suggest the antitype which is its fulfillment.

	Month	Day	Festival	Antitype
I.	1	14	Passover	Death of Christ
II.	1	15-21	Unleavened	Acts Period
III.			First Fruit	Resurrection
IV.			Pentecost	Pentecost
V.	7	1	Trumpets	Judgment
VI.	7	10	Propitiation	Affliction
VII.	7	15-21	Tabernacles	Kingdom

These festivals and their fulfillment are worthy of a whole volume by themselves, but all we wish to point out at present is the place of the day of propitiation. There are two groups of festivals. One starts in the first month and the next six months later. One gives us the judgment of Golgotha and the results that followed (1 Cor. 5:7; Ja. 1:18); the second is the judgment now before us, and its results.

The Trumpets will immediately bring to mind the seven trumpets which we are about to study. The Tabernacles celebration is a beautiful picture of the kingdom which the trumpets inaugurate. In between we have the day of propitiation. It prefigured the great affliction which will fall upon them just before the kingdom comes. It was on the tenth of the month (Lev. 23:27).

The point we wish to press is this: On the day of atonement the chief duty of an Israelite is to *afflict his soul* (Lev. 23:27). There was to be no joy, no feasting, nothing to please the senses. This is a type of the sufferings and martyrdom of the faithful in the time of their greatest affliction. It is this suffering, at the hands of the alien nations, which precipitates the political judgments of the Apocalypse.

Let us clearly grasp the close connection between the soul and the blood. Our Lord *poured out* His soul unto death (Isa. 53:12). Literally, He shed His blood. And this is not a reference to His death, but to the sufferings which led up to His decease. This is one of the earliest figures used in the Bible. The blood of Abel cried to God from the ground (Gen. 4:10). No one imagines that it became miraculously articulate. It was the *suffering* of Abel that appealed to God for vengeance.

The position of the souls shows us that God regards them as sacrificial victims. Every time their enemies murdered one of them for His sake it came up before Him as a reminder of the One great Sacrifice, Who also

died at the hands of His enemies. Their blood, consequently, is poured out underneath the altar. In Solomon's temple, and Herod's as well, there was a vast cistern beneath the altar to receive the blood of the victims. But their souls are in the blood, hence we read of "the souls under the altar".

This is one of the most pregnant and impressive figures in the whole range of Scripture. Throughout this period Israel is before Him and they are the key to His judicial acts. Are we to view the infliction of wrath upon the nations? First we are shown the great fact that it comes because they have persecuted and murdered His elect, just as the position of what remains of the nations will be determined in the kingdom by their treatment of His people. We are given no description of the sufferings the saints endure. That is found elsewhere, especially in our Lord's own account of these days. This section of the Unveiling deals rather with the great judgments on the nations, and God's reason for their infliction. Israel's "great affliction" must be avenged! Immediately an awful change sweeps over the very face of nature. Deception, war, famine, and pestilence are very bad, but they have seldom been wholly absent from the earth. It is only their intense severity which makes them so terrible at the time of the end. But even then God is hidden. They may be accounted for by natural causes.

Now, however, God steps forth as the champion of His people. He bares His mighty arm in the face of all nations. The tide of human affairs has turned. Man's day is ended. The Lord's day begins. Now no one any longer dreams that God is dead or has forgotten His creatures. His judgments are in the earth. He shakes it. He trains the artillery of heaven above upon it. He sends a scourge from beneath out of its very bowels.

Great is the day of Jehovah!

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 6:12-17

¹²And I perceived, when It opens the sixth seal, and a great cataclysm occurred, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood, ¹³and the stars of heaven fall on the earth as a fig tree is casting its shriveled figs, quaking under a great wind. ¹⁴And heaven recoils as a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵And the kings of the earth, and the magnates, and the captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every slave and freeman, hide themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶And they are saying to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him Who is sitting on the throne, and from the indignation of the Lambkin, ¹⁷seeing that the great day of Their indignation came, and who is able to stand?"

THE SIXTH SEAL

THE sixth seal is the sequel to the fifth. The blood of the martyrs is to be avenged. By a few graphic strokes we are given a general view of the inflictions which introduce the open manifestation of the day of Jehovah.

As usual, the key to this seal is found in our Lord's discourse on the mount of Olives, which is printed herewith, but it is also graphically described in the Prophets as is perhaps no other single event in the future. Isaiah is very vivid in his vision (Isa. 13: 6-13):

⁶ Howl! for near is the day of Jehovah!

As devastation from the All-Sufficient shall it come.

⁷ Therefore all hands shall be relaxed,

And every mortal heart shall melt,

⁸ And they shall be flustered.

Distress and cramps shall take hold of them.

As she that is bearing shall they travail.

A man at his associate shall be amazed.

As the appearance of blazes are their faces.

⁹ Behold! the day of Jehovah comes,

Cruel and raging and hot with anger,

To make the land a desolation!

And its sinners He will exterminate from it.

¹⁰ For the stars of the heavens and their constellations

Shall not irradiate their light,

The sun is darkened in its going forth,

And the moon shall not be bright with its light,

¹¹ And I punish the habitation with evil,

And the wicked with their depravity.

And I cause to cease the pomp of the arrogant,

And the pride of the terrible will I abase.

¹² I will make a mortal more precious than fine gold,

And a man than pure gold of Ophir.

Matthew 24

²⁹ Now immediately after the affliction of those days the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not be giving her beams, and the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

Mark 13

²⁴ But in those days, after that affliction, the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not be giving her beams.
²⁵ And the stars shall be falling out of heaven, and the powers in the heavens shall be shaken.

¹³ Therefore the heavens will I disturb,
 And the earth shall quake from its place,
 At the rage of Jehovah of hosts,
 And in the day of the heat of His anger.

Dealing with the land, he says again (Isa. 24: 19-23) :

¹⁰ By smashing is smashed the earth,
 To frustrate is frustrated the earth.
²⁰ To slide is sliding the earth.
 To sway shall sway the earth as if drunk,
 And caused to wander as a lodge.
 And heavy on it is its trespass,
 And it falls and not again shall it rise.
²¹ And it comes to be in that day
 Punish shall Jehovah the host of the high in the height,
 And the kings of the ground on the ground,
²² And they gather, gathered as prisoners in a cistern,
 And closed in an enclosure.
 And after many days will they be visited.
²³ And abashed is the white moonshine,
 And ashamed the warm sunshine,
 For reigns Jehovah of hosts in mount Zion and in Jerusalem,
 And in front of His elders has glory.

He threatens the nations (Isa. 34: 1-4) :

¹ Draw near, ye nations, to hear!
 And, ye races, attend!
 Hear shall the earth and her fullness,
 The habitation and all its issue,
² For wrath at Jehovah is on all the nations,
 And fury on all their host.
 He causes their doom.
 He gives them to slaughter,
³ And their wounded shall be flung away,
 And from their corpses shall ascend their stink.
 And melt do the mountains with their blood.
⁴ And putrefy, all the host of the heavens.
 And rolled up as a scroll are the heavens.
 And all their host is decaying as decays the leaf from the vine,
 And as one decays from the fig.

Luke 21

²⁵ And there shall be signs in the sun and the moon and the constellations, and on the earth, pressure of nations in perplexity, a resounding of the sea and agitation, ²⁶ a chilling of men from fear and apprehension of that which is coming on the inhabited earth, for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

Unveiling 6

¹² And I perceived, when It opens the sixth seal, and a great cataclysm occurred, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood, ¹³ and the stars of heaven fall on the earth as a fig tree is casting its shriveled figs, quaking under a great wind. ¹⁴ And heaven recoils as a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, and the magnates, and the captains, and the rich, and the strong, and all slaves and freemen, hide themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶ And they are saying to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him Who is sitting on the throne, and from the indignation of the Lamb-kin, ¹⁷ seeing that the great day of Their indignation came, and *who is able to stand?*"

It has been suggested that, because the words "confusion" and "emptiness" in the eleventh verse of this chapter are the same as "waste" and "void" of Gen. 1:2, it refers to the judgment at the *end* of the Lord's day. But these words apply equally well to the judgments at its beginning, and all other points indicate the time of the sixth seal. This time may well recall the convulsions which destroyed the former earth.

Much in Joel's prophecy of the invasion of Assyria has its fulfillment in the days to come (Joel 2:1, 10-12, 30, 31, C.V.):

¹ Blow a trumpet in Zion!

Shout in My holy mountain!

All those who dwell in the land shall be disturbed,

- For the day of Jehovah comes,
For it is near.
- ¹⁰ The earth is perturbed before them,
The heavens quake,
The sun and the moon are somber,
The stars gather in their brightness,
- ¹¹ And Jehovah shall give His voice before His host,
For His camp is very vast,
For staunch is he who does His word.
For the day of Jehovah is great and very fearful
And who shall contain it?
- ¹² Moreover also now, avers Jehovah,
Return unto Me with all your heart
And with fasting and with lamenting, and with
bemoaning.
- ³⁰ And I give miracles in the heavens
And in the earth blood and fire and pillars of smoke.
- ³¹ The sun shall be turned to darkness
And the moon to blood
Before the great and fearful day of Jehovah comes.

The great shaking is first predicted by Haggai 2: 6, 7):

- ⁶ For thus says Jehovah of hosts: Still once—a little is it—
And I quake the heavens and the earth and the sea and
the drained land.
- ⁷ And I quake all nations, and comes the coveted of all
nations,
And I fill this house with glory, says Jehovah of hosts.

There is a close concord and happy harmony between the physical and the spiritual, which is hid from all but anointed eyes. Nature is not merely a painting of spiritual realities, rendering them visible to mortal perception, but is a moving picture of spiritual activities as well. Often when we are in doubt and ask, Is this literal or figurative? the answer is, It is both. Often have we been asked whether the new creation is a real physical phenomenon, or rather indicative of a great reorganization of spiritual forces. Our reply is, It is both. But the record is concerned with the physical.

This thought is clearly seen in the sixth seal. Not only is there the supreme cataclysmic convulsion in nature, but an upheaval of the spiritual forces of the uni-

verse is implied. Our first object, however, should be to get a good grasp of the physical side.

The spiritual cause of this cataclysm is clear. It is the coming of the Enthroned One. Can we not account for the physical phenomena on similar grounds? From far out in stellar space comes a mighty visitor—call it a star, a comet, or any other name—and we at once have an adequate cause for the mighty portents and awful calamities under the sixth seal. Such a star would drive millions of asteroids out of their path, it would rack earth's faulty framework and send a shudder throughout the solar system.

The judgments under the first four seals are, as their number indicates, of an earthly character. Five speaks of weakness, and fitly stands for the Semitic persecutions of the fifth seal. Six suggests the height of human arrogance, when man combines his weakness with celestial spiritual powers, to force God from the earth. The moment man confederates with the heavenly hordes of wickedness, God brings on His heavenly hosts. So that, in the sixth seal, we have the physical aspect of that supreme spiritual conflict which occurs at the same time and which is recorded in detail in the Temple Section of this scroll in chapters twelve to twenty.

There is something supremely solemn and awful in this scene which records the crisis of universal history. So long as heaven keeps its distance the denizens of earth dare to do as they please, but the instant this mighty celestial visitant appears, the whole fabric of nature collapses. So it has always been in Jehovah's presence. When He descended to give the law, "all of mount Sinai smoked from Jehovah's presence, which descended on it in fire, and the smoke is ascending as the smoke of a lime kiln, and the whole mountain wavered exceedingly" (Ex. 19:18, C.V.). Even the judgment of the cross caused the sun to hide its beams, and its dreadfulness

was draped in darkness. So, when the severest of earth's judgments is staged, the setting is in accord with its fearful fury.

Of the "scientific" accuracy of Holy Writ no reverent student is ever in doubt. When science teaches facts and not philosophy, and when theology does the same, all need of reconciling them will be gone, for they will be in perfect agreement. We have a notable instance of a scientific distinction in the passages which record this cataclysm which illustrates this.

A man of science would scoff at the idea of the stars falling to the earth, especially as the sun and the moon are expressly excepted. For, if *any* heavenly body would fall to earth, it would be the moon, and as to the sun or the larger stars, the earth would fall into them, rather than a multitude of stars upon it!

But let us note carefully a distinction which is usually overlooked. We are told that the stars shall fall from *heaven* (singular) and, in contrast to this, the powers of the *heavens* (plural) shall be shaken. What is the reason for this change in number? What is the difference between the heaven and the heavens? It is well known that "heaven" is sometimes translated "air". The "birds [or fowls] of the air" (Mat. 6:26; 8:20; 13:32; Mark 4:32; Luke 8:5; 9:58; 13:19; Acts 10:12; 11:6) brings before us a very limited sphere. The strongest eagle cannot fly more than a few miles above the earth. This should be translated "heaven" always, *in the singular*. This heaven is not so far away as we supposed! Many a plane is winging its way through this "heaven" today!

Sometimes our translators have rendered it "sky". This sky may indicate the weather (Luke 12:56). This can refer, of course, only to the lower strata of the atmosphere. The lightning is said to flash "under heaven" (Luke 17:24), the rain or shower is given by

heaven (Ja. 5:18), and hail comes down thence in these judgments (Un. 16:21), for it is the home of the clouds (Mt. 24:30; 26:64; Mk. 14:62). These occurrences are always in the singular, *never in the plural*. It is evident, even to the unscientific mind, that "the heaven", in Scripture, is limited to that part of the heavens contiguous to the earth, and which is within the sphere of its influence.

This is confirmed by such phrases as "a voice from heaven" (Lu. 3:22; Jn. 12:28; 2 Pet. 1:18; Un. 11:12; 11:15; 14:2, 13; 18:4), by fire from heaven (Lu. 9:54; Un. 13:13), a sign in heaven or from heaven (Mat. 16:1; 24:30; Mk. 8:11; Lu. 11:16; 21:11; Un. 12:1; 15:1), and, what is especially in point at present, stars from heaven (Mat. 24:29; Mark 13:25). These are not the stars of the heavens to which the scientist would refer it, but "stars" visible only as they come into that sphere which we have clearly shown is immediately adjacent to the earth.

It is a striking fact, and one which we have never seen set forth, that the scope of the Unveiling is limited to "the heaven" and the earth. It is not concerned with "the heavens". Heaven, in the singular, is mentioned more than half a hundred times, while the single occurrence of heavens is in contrast to the nether sphere (Un. 12:12). In the perfection epistles of Paul this is reversed. It is always the "heavens", and only once "heaven", referring to the scope of the proclamation of the creation evangel.

Another important conclusion which comes from these considerations, limits the phrase "heaven and earth" to a much narrower sphere than creation, which included "the heavens and the earth". When we read that heaven and earth shall pass by, the immediate thought is confined to the sphere of the earth's influence, though, of course, it does not deny a wider range to

the final conflagration (Mat. 5:18; 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 16:17; Un. 20:11).

In Greek and Hebrew one term was applied to all the luminaries of the heavens, except the sun and the moon. The Greek word *aster* is found in English in our *asteroid*, and is the source of our word *star*. One form of it, *astron*, they set aside for designating groups of stars, or constellations (Luke 21:25; Acts 7:43; 27:20; Heb. 11:12). The word *star* is used the same in English. A speck of incandescent dust is called a shooting or falling *star*. So we need have no hesitancy in applying the term to any luminous object in the sky.

In contrast with "the stars of *heaven*" is the phrase "the powers of the *heavens*". While the special location of the stars is limited to the neighborhood of the earth, so tremendous will be the convulsion which centers about the earth that the shock will send a shudder to the utmost bounds of the universe (Mark 13:25).

There is ample reason to believe that a convulsion of this nature has already taken place, not so very far from the earth. The guarded phrase "since mankind came to be on the earth" (Un. 16:18) suggests not only that there have been earthquakes much greater than any known at present, as indicated by the enormous faults in the earth's surface, but that these may have been occasioned by strains from without as well as within. It is well known that, besides the planets and their attendants which wander about the ecliptic, there are a vast number of fragments where we would look for another planet. Evidently some enormous alien force has entered among the planets and rent one of them into thousands of pieces.

Space seems to be filled with flying fragments, millions of which fall to the earth even at the present time. I have counted hundreds of "shooting stars" in a single evening. For three hours of the night of November 13,

1833. men were frightened almost to death, thinking that the sixth seal was being broken (if they had ever heard of it). or that the end of all things had come. The sky was filled with flashing meteors, and looked as if all the stars were falling to the earth. This alone is evidence that "the stars of heaven" are ready for the great day when the sudden shock will send them hurtling to the earth.

Fig trees often fail to ripen the full crop, especially if water is wanting and there is much heat. The figs shrivel up, their stems become brittle, so that the least touch breaks them off. A sudden gust of wind will send showers of these shriveled figs to the ground. Such is the picture presented of the falling stars. I have watched a single meteor with considerable dread as it hissed across the sky, for there was no telling where it would strike. How terrible it would be to have the sky covered with them, thick as a barrage of bullets in a battle!

Picture to yourself the awful scene. Sun and moon obscured, the blackness stabbed by millions of menacing meteors, the ground swaying beneath your feet, even the mountains moving and the islands leaving their places! Can we imagine a more desperate situation? Yet, terrible as it is, this is not the worst. These are all the forces of nature, impersonal, implacable, heartless, yet limited to their present fury and unable to do more than kill their victims. In milder forms, all these have been met before. The sun hides its face each evening, yet reappears at dawn. The moon is often invisible. Clouds and ashes have darkened the air, and meteors have fallen before. Even the ground has shaken, taking a terrible toll of life. It is their combined intensity which appals mankind. But these do not send men scurrying into caves and the rocks of the mountains. These do not urge them to hide. These are but the prelude to the most momentous vision earth will ever see.

Of a sudden the black pall that covers all is rolled back, and reveals the sign of the Son of Mankind in all His glory. The vision that had been vouchsafed to heaven alone is now visible on earth. Like a new luminary, blotting out the sun by its brightness, appears the most glorious majesty of the epiphany of the coming Christ. Just as the lightning flashes forth from the sullen clouds, so the presence of the Son of Mankind will be. Not a secret session, or a subtle influence, but a sudden and awful manifestation of glory.

This marks the turning point in God's dealings with mankind. He no longer hides behind His providence. He appears in the open. Man is no longer contending with nature's forces but with a personal and present Judge. The inflictions henceforth are supernatural, miraculous. This is the important lesson of the sixth seal. It contains the crisis, the turning point in the divine dealings with mankind. The heart of man is so hard that the darkness and the quaking fail to make it quail. But when the veil of heaven is drawn aside and the glorious One is revealed, that is more than it can bear. As Isaiah has said (2:19):

¹⁹ And they enter into the caves of the rocks,
And into tunnels of the soil,
From the face of awful Jehovah,
And from the honor of His pride,
When He rises to terrify the earth.

The day of indignation has come. Of old, when Adam sinned, he dreaded God's displeasure, and so he hid himself. Now, once more, sinners are confronted not merely with war, or famine, or disease, but with a personal, indignant Deity, and so they instinctively seek to hide from the divine presence. Before Him, who can stand? Is not this the climax of man's alienation, the very summit of the estrangement of the race from its Creator? Let us turn for a few moments to another scene and, note the contrast. On the new earth no one is afraid of God.

His presence brings balm and blessing. He is compassionate, not indignant. So should it always be. Life and joy are in His smile. But His frown brings fear. His fury is terrible. His indignation wrings from their hearts a cry of abject despair, for no one is able to stand when He visits the earth with His wrath.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 7:1-8

7 And after this I perceived four messengers standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth that the wind may not be blowing on the land, nor on the sea, nor on any tree at all.

²And I perceived another messenger ascending from the orient, having the seal of the living God. And he cries with a loud voice to the four messengers to whom it was given for them to injure the land and the sea, ³saying, "*You shall not be injuring the land, nor the sea, nor the trees, until we should be sealing the slaves of our God on their foreheads.*" ⁴And I hear the number of those who have been sealed: a hundred forty-four thousand who have been sealed out of every tribe of the sons of Israel. ⁵Out of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand have been sealed; out of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand; out of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand; ⁶out of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand; out of the tribe of Nephthalim twelve thousand; out of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand; ⁷out of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand; out of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand; out of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand; ⁸out of the tribe of Zebulon twelve thousand; out of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand; out of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand have been sealed.

THE HUNDRED FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND SEALED

WHO is able to stand? The terrors of the sixth seal seem to be beyond human endurance. Our Lord Himself says "those days will be affliction, such as has not occurred from the beginning of the creation which God creates till now, and under no circumstances may be occurring. And, except the Lord discounts the days, no flesh at all would be saved. But because of the chosen whom He chooses, He discounts the days" (Mark 13:19-20).

On the human side, it will appear as if some are saved because they endure to the end of these terrific trials. But from the divine viewpoint no one is able to do this if the judgment should be allowed its normal course. It is an illuminating commentary on the character of God, that He allows grace to loiter along for centuries, but judgment is not allowed even its allotted time. He lets His sun shine day after day; but the lightning sears its path but a second.

But He not only shortens the days so that some of the non-elect pass through the inferno, but He protects His own in it. He chooses two classes in Israel, both of which survive the day of His indignation. Many in Israel will die a martyr's death, such as those whose voices from beneath the altar call down this judgment on the earth. But two special companies of saints are saved through it, one a definite number, the other, an innumerable throng.

The hundred forty-four thousand are to be specially selected to go unscathed through the fire, much as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and their Deliverer walked in the midst of a fiery furnace so hot that it dealt out death to the men who cast them in. So, in the time of the end, the great king of the nations will seek to destroy the choicest company of Israelites, but will not be able to harm them.

The seal, in Scripture, speaks of safety and security. To keep the disciples from stealing the body of our Lord they sealed the stone (Mat. 27:66). Satan's prison will be sealed during the thousand years (Un. 20:3). We are sealed with the holy spirit for the day of deliverance (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30). The hundred forty-four thousand will be sealed in their foreheads (Un. 9:4) to make them safe and secure during the great afflictions which are about to befall the earth. The effect of this sealing is especially seen under the fifth trumpet, when the monstrous locusts torment mankind for five months. They are prohibited from injuring those who have God's seal on their foreheads, which applies only to the hundred forty-four thousand (9:4).

This is sufficient evidence for taking this sealing as a visible token, plainly seen, placed on their foreheads. The seal of God today is invisible, unperceived even by our fellow men, unless they, too, have God's spirit. Such a seal cannot be imprinted on our foreheads. It would not be recognized by the awful horde of locusts. Their seal is an actual mark as much as the emblem of the wild beast, worn by all his followers. It is not a badge affixed by men, but an imprint placed by a divine messenger. It is not in the heart, but on the forehead. Just as the blood on the lintel was a sign to the destroying messenger in Egypt, shielding those within from his hand, so this seal will shield the hundred forty-four thousand from the furious inflictions which follow.

In this, the throne section of the Apocalypse, these men appear as slaves. In the temple section they reappear as singers and worshipers (14:1-5). There we learn that the seal consists of the name of the Lambkin and of the Father, in written form. And there we also learn that they are all unmarried males. Celibacy is their distinguishing feature. No woman or married man will have any place in their ranks. When we come to consider the religion of the wild beast, we will see the full force of this. Impurity is the most popular feature of human religions, and it will have full sway at the time of the end. Hence God's avowed worshipers are absolutely divorced from any suspicion of social immorality. They are all celibates, and no woman can have a place among them.

If this sealing were simply a symbolic scene, in which Israel's twelve tribes are representative of the redeemed, the usual enumeration would certainly be given. Elsewhere Levi is not counted among the tribes, and Joseph is represented by his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, thus making the twelve (Gen. 48:5: Num. 1:47). But here Ephraim is not mentioned. Instead we have his father Joseph. And Levi is included, while Dan is omitted. What is the reason for this?

Beside the covenant made with Israel in Horeb, there was a special one on the subject of idolatry made in the land of Moab (Deut. 29:1-20). After they had taken Heshbon and Bashan, and the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh had settled in the land once given over to idol worship, He promises to establish them if they cleave to Him, but if any man, woman, family, or *tribe* should introduce the worship of idols, He would blot out his name from under heaven and they would be subject to His curse. The eighteenth chapter of Judges gives an extended account of how the tribe of Dan stole a graven image from Micah. They set up the graven image and

had a priest for it until the time of the captivity. Hence they, as a tribe, are not sealed from the terrors of the end time.

Besides this, when the kingdom was divided after Solomon's death, Jeroboam was afraid to allow the people to go up to Jerusalem to worship, so he set up two golden calves, one in Dan, and one in Beth-el, in Ephraim. This is continually referred to as the great sin which the son of Nebat introduced into Israel. Therefore both Dan and Ephraim are left to suffer with the idolators of the end time and lose their representation in the hundred forty-four thousand. The sin of Dan is flagrant, hence the substitution of Levi. Ephraim, however, has his *name* blotted out, but possibly many in the tribe itself will be sealed, as belonging to the tribe of "Joseph", which can refer only to Manasseh and Ephraim, his two sons. As Manasseh is mentioned, it must refer to Ephraim, or those in the tribe who repudiate Ephraim's sin.

The exclusion of Levi from an allotment in the land was no hardship to them because they were supported by the tithes of their brethren. But to be excluded from this sealing would have been a dire calamity, and very unjust, hence they must be given their quota of twelve thousand.

This re-arrangement of the tribes is only a temporary one, for the purpose of preserving them during the end time. In the kingdom Dan will, indeed, be, as always, far from the center of worship, yet restored to its larger allotment. Ephraim resumes his usual place and larger portion. Levi shall have a special portion in the center besides the offerings of the other tribes (Eze. 48).

There is a designed contrast between the exact number of the hundred forty-four thousand and the vast throng which no one was able to number, which will next come before us. It is not mystical or symbolic but lit-

eral and exact. We have a little suggestion of this in the war against Midian (Num. 31). There one thousand men were taken from each tribe, exactly twelve thousand in all. And the marvel of it was that not a man perished. When the troops were counted at the close of the war not a man was lacking of all that host. So it will be with the hundred forty-four thousand. The number is fixed. So many will be sealed and so many will be preserved unscathed through the judgment. Not one of them can be injured. Not one can lose his place in that elect company.

The number who are sealed presents no difficulty to the thoughtful student. How many Israelites there will be at the close of this eon we do not know. But, taking the Jews alone, there will doubtless be over ten million. Allowing one to each seventy would give the required number. This seems very reasonable.

There can be no doubt, however, that the number is significant. The close connection of the number twelve with administration and the nation of Israel is too apparent to miss. Not only were there twelve patriarchs, but the Lord chose just twelve apostles to rule the twelve tribes. When Judas fell, there must be another chosen to complete the number. In this enumeration we have twelve squared, so we feel sure that the sealed slaves must be, in some sense, commissioners of the kingdom. We cannot think of a thousand rulers for each tribe, and tribal rule has already been delegated to the twelve, none of whom are among the hundred forty-four thousand.

The number twelve is here combined with ten. It is the square of twelve with the cube of ten. In this scroll the number ten is often used of the horns of the wild beast, which, we will see, bring before us the military powers of the earth. The horns are crowned with ten diadems (13:1). We know that Israel will rule the nations, and it is more than probable that the hundred

forty-four thousand will be the commissioners of the great King, who will represent Him among the nations and who will rule them with an iron club. This thought suggests their association with the "overcomers" or conquerors of Thyatira (2:27). Being celibates, they certainly are not implicated in the teaching of Jezebel, and thus, they are entitled to shepherd the nations in the day of the Lord.

It also suggests (what we hope to elaborate in due time) that these are the *male son* (12:5) brought forth by Israel at this time, who is also said to be about to shepherd all nations with an iron club.

The many attempts to claim membership in the hundred forty-four thousand by saints in the present administration of God's grace are effectively nullified by their number. Millions have maintained that they belong to this privileged class, for the saints, alas, are eager to exalt themselves, and few are concerned about the faithful of other administrations. The spirit that leaves all the judgments for Israel and appropriates all the blessings for ourselves will always prevail until the truth of our transcendent blessings has so taken possession of our hearts that we have no desire to rob Israel even of the very highest of her privileges. One who anticipates a place of rule in realms celestial is not eager to grasp the iron club with which the hundred forty-four thousand will regulate affairs among the nations in the millennial earth. Then there will be saints of various ranks, for this is a necessity in such an administration. Politically, the twelve apostles will rule the twelve tribes and the hundred forty-four thousand will administer justice among the nations. Religiously, the priests and the Levites will serve in the sanctuary. But it will not be so with us. There is only *one* body, and this is a "joint" body, in which each member is of equal rank with every other member. Rewards for service will be individual, not by classes. So great is our grace, so vital is our union

with Christ, that we *all* shall enjoy an exaltation, among the celestials, far above that given to the hundred forty-four thousand on earth. Those who are so weighted with wealth as we are, should not seek to seize the property of others who are not so fortunate.

The one hundred forty-four thousand, therefore, we take to be the commissioners and deputies of Him Who will shepherd the nations during the thousand years.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 7:9-17

⁹After these things I perceived, and *lo!* a vast throng which no one was able to number, out of all nations and the tribes and peoples and languages, standing in sight of the throne and in sight of the Lambkin, clothed in white robes and palms in their hands. ¹⁰And they are crying with a loud voice, saying,

*“Salvation be our God’s,
Who is sitting on the throne,
And of the Lambkin!”*

¹¹And all the messengers stood around the throne and the elders and the four animals. And they fall on their faces in sight of the throne, and worship God, ¹²saying:

*“Amen!
The bliss and glory and wisdom and thanks
And honor and power and strength be our God’s
For the eons of the eons.
Amen!”*

¹³And one of the elders answered, saying to me, “These who are clothed in white robes—who are they, and whence came they?” ¹⁴And I have declared to him: “My lord, you are aware.” And he said to me, “These are they who are coming out of the great affliction. And they rinse their robes, and they whiten them in the blood of the Lambkin. ¹⁵Therefore they are in sight of the throne of God and are offering divine service to Him day and night in His temple. And He Who is sitting on the throne will be tabernacling over them. ¹⁶They shall be hungering no longer; nor shall they be thirsting any longer; no, nor should the sun be falling on them, nor any heat at all, ¹⁷seeing that the throne-centered Lambkin shall be shepherding them, and shall be guiding them to living springs of water, and every tear shall God be brushing away from their eyes.”

THE THRONG INNUMERABLE

THE hundred forty-four thousand are the firstfruit of the millennial harvest (14:4; Lev. 23:10). The vast throng is symbolized by the festival of ingathering (Lev. 23:39-42). They appear with palm branches in their hands (7:9). They dwell in the tabernacle or booth of the Enthroned One (7:15). These, as well as the hundred forty-four thousand who are sealed, are able to stand in the great day of His indignation.

Perhaps there is nothing in the history of nations so remarkable as the dispersion of the Jews. Not only are there American Jews and English Jews, and French, German, Russian, and Polish Jews, besides the special Spanish branch, but we are assured that there are Chinese Jews. Indeed, it would be venturesome to say that any people was entirely free from the presence of the Semitic strain. And the process is still proceeding. Persecution is transplanting them into every known nation. They speak almost every language.

Even Moses predicted such a dispersion. "And it shall come to pass that all the words shall come on you, the blessing and the slighting, which I put before you, and you restore them to your heart among all the nations where Jehovah your God caused you to be driven away, and you return unto Jehovah your God, and hearken to His voice according to all that *I* direct you today, you and your sons, with all your heart and with all your soul. And Jehovah your God returns you from your captivity, and pities you, and returns and gathers you together from all the peoples where Jehovah your God caused you to be scattered" (Deut. 30:1-3, C.V.).

This fact seems to have been overlooked in the identification of the innumerable throng. All the symbolism employed places them among the saved of the sacred nation. Israel itself did not keep the feast of ingathering (Neh. 8:16, 17) until after the return from Babylon. Then they celebrated it with great rejoicing (Ezra 3:11, 12). How can it possibly figure a company of aliens, to whom these festivals do not apply? It was never kept in the wilderness, because it was reserved for the land, when they dwelt in houses. It was to remind them of the wilderness, when they dwelt in booths.

All this typical teaching is for naught if we transfer this scene to the nations. We have a firstfruit, but no harvest, in Israel. We have a limited number saved, all males, scarcely more than one per cent. of the nation. We have the favored people doubly decimated, and bring unnumbered aliens into their fold. *The vast throng, as well as the hundred forty-four thousand are Israelites, to whom the promises pertain.* We earnestly commend this interpretation to the consideration of students of this prophecy. It seems to be a satisfactory solution of a difficult problem.

In response to the question: "Who is able to stand?" (6:17), we are given a view of all those who will be saved in the royal nation, including the vast throng who *stand* before the throne (7:9). The one hundred forty-four thousand are manifestly only a part, for they are not only called a firstfruit, but, being celibates, cannot be the nucleus of the millennial nation. There is not a woman among them. The saints who are raised from the dead will have no part in the marvelous growth of the nation during the millennium. This can come only from such a company as the vast throng we are considering.

For the nations, the present is a day of salvation: that will be a day of destruction. For Israel, it will be the day of their deliverance. Hence the significance of the song they sing:

Salvation be our God's*,
Who is sitting on the throne,
And of the Lambkin!

"*Our God*" is intensely appropriate to the only nation whose God was Jehovah. On the lips of other nations it might suggest the idols of their hands or minds, to whom they do obeisance. The theme of their song is the thrilling fact that *their* God, Jehovah, has at length assumed the reins of earth's government and will save them by His outstretched arm, as He did at the exodus from Egypt in the days of old. There is to be deliverance by power. But there is also ransom by blood. The long despised Lambkin, whose blood was shed for them, as a nation, is the basis of Jehovah's blessing. Long have they tried to save themselves and despised the Lamb of God. Now they base all on His blood.

The representatives of all creation, celestial and terrestrial, as well as the intermediate messengers, respond with their pæan of praise. They glimpse the grandeur of this great crisis and its effect on the glory of God. The forces of evil and sin have been in the ascendant, but the salvation of the vast throng is the inauguration of a better day, in which His glorious attributes will be publicly displayed. Hence they sing:

"Amen!
The bliss and glory and wisdom and thanks
And honor and power and strength be our God's
For the eons of the eons.
Amen!"

The positive proof that this company is not composed of aliens but Israelites is found in the clue given John for their identification. "These are they who are com-

*The Greek is, literally, "*to* our God," and it is usual to render it so. But this hazily suggests the desire that *God* should be saved, in English. The almost equally valuable reading of Alexandrinus is "*of* our God". Hence our rendering, "be our God's".

ing out of the great affliction.” If we take “the great tribulation”, as it is usually called, merely as a general term to indicate the world-wide troubles of the end time, this identification is of little help. But when we find that “the great affliction” is a special phrase denoting the sufferings of the faithful in Israel at the hands of the other nations, the identification is complete.

Our Lord, speaking of it, says that they shall be hated by all nations because of His name (Mat. 24:9). The greatest of all afflictions is to come on the saints in Israel by the hands of the other nations. This term is not used of the indignation of God against the nations. None of the gentiles are in the great affliction. Hence none of them can come out of it. The phrase is used in this passage as well as by our Lord in His discourse on the mount of Olives (Mat. 24). Any one reading that prophecy will readily see that the great affliction is not concerned with the wars among the nations or the divine visitations of judgment, but with the persecution of Messiah’s faithful disciples in the land of Israel. Traveling is exceedingly disagreeable and difficult, even under normal conditions, during the torrential rains of winter in Palestine. And only Jews, strict observers of the sabbath, on which no lengthy journey could be undertaken, would be hindered from flight should the persecution break out on the seventh day of the week.

Some suggestion of their suffering is seen in the negative description of their bliss. Hunger and thirst, and scorching heat will be theirs, and eyes blinded with bitter tears. We are, in spirit, carried through their trials, and see them among millennial joys, worshiping in His temple or shepherded by the Lambkin Who leads them by green pastures and living springs. Not theirs the high honors of the kingdom. Not theirs the song of the hundred forty-four thousand. But their cup will be full and their joys abound. They have suffered

earth's severest affliction and they will enjoy earth's balmy bliss.

In contrast with the present grace, there has always been a series of castes in Israel. Their ritual involved class distinctions. The privileges of the priest placed him above the populace. The courts of the sanctuary made a division between the people in regard to their approach to Jehovah.

So it is also in their salvation. Being based on a mingling of works with faith, we find various bodies of believers. In the ecclesias, the conquering ones are in a class by themselves, and they will be accorded special privileges in the kingdom. In this part of the Apocalypse, concerned with the throne and Israel's sovereignty over the nations, we are first introduced to the special class who are to rule the nations with a rod of iron. Subsequently, under the temple section, we see them again as religious leaders. But the one hundred forty-four thousand is only the upper class among the redeemed in Israel. The vast throng completes the number of the saved who survive the time of trial.

There has been the constant tendency to introduce such divisions into the present grace. But that is because the transcendence and purity of the grace has not been apprehended. When salvation and blessing are absolutely divorced from merit or work, and flow only from the unforced favor of God, there is no possibility of various castes among the saints.

There is now only *one* body (Eph. 4:4). And that body is a joint-body, in which every member is peer of every other. Knowledge gives no superiority, attainment monopolizes no privileges which are not the portion of all. He that has, or thinks he has, something more than his fellow saints, is reminded that he has nothing which he has not received. The glorious grace which is ours in Christ Jesus is equally lavish to all who are its recipients.

The realization of this grace, the church's most precious possession, was soon lost, and ecclesiastic hierarchies arose. Where all are welcome within the holiest, there is no need for a priestly caste. But the church has become divided into priest and people, clergy and laity, and the servant of the church has become its "minister".

This retreat from the high plane of grace soon led to the loss of the special teaching for the church, as found in Paul's epistles. And this, in turn, led to the confusion of the creeds and the multiplicity of "bodies" in the church. They are all founded on the Bible, yet strange to say, they appeal to that part of the Bible which was never written for their use, and practically ignore that which was especially revealed for their guidance.

Those of us who are learning some of the glorious truths which are our special heritage in this economy need to be on our guard lest we confound the grace of God with its apprehension. Let us not imagine that the ignorance of others places them in an inferior position. To the Hebrews it was written that Christ will appear to them that look for Him. His coming to them is connected with vigilance. But not so now. So gracious is our salvation that not a saint will fail to respond when He is present. Whether we watch, or are drowsy, we shall all live together with Him (1 Thes. 5:10). We will not be divided when He comes. Though we should not even be worthy of a place in the vast throng, grace will give us a portion immeasurably above that of the hundred forty-four thousand. The lowest in the celestial glory will gain a place the best of earth will not attain.

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

“BLOW a trumpet in Zion! . . . for the day of Jehovah comes, for it is near: a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and of murkiness . . .” (Joel 2: 1, 2, C.V.). The trumpet was blown in Israel both in war and in peace. Moses gave them the statute that if “you shall come to fight in your land against the foe that distresses you, you shall shout with a bugle” (Num. 10: 9, C.V.). And again “Also in the day of your rejoicing . . . ye shall blow with a bugle” (Num. 10: 10, C.V.). How fitting, then, that God’s great conflict with the nations should be set forth under the symbol of seven trumpets!.

Yet we must not let these dreadful alarms rob us of the delightful anticipation of that joyful blast which will transform us into His likeness and call us to Himself. For us the trumpet is a gladsome sound, the most welcome that our ears can hear, the signal of our deliverance from every ill and the fulfillment of every expectation. It will summon us into His presence beyond the sphere of judgment. The seven trumpets are the very opposite of this. They usher in earth’s darkest hour with a train of woes unparalleled.

The seventh is the last of the trumpets. Hence it has sometimes been identified with “the last trump” which will change the living at the Lord’s coming (1 Cor. 15: 52). If this be so, our entire interpretation so far is wrong. Then the saints of this economy of God’s transcendent grace are called upon to endure the raging of

His wrath. Instead of participating in the untraceable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8) we are identified with the wrath which was revealed through the prophets. Instead of being blessed with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, we are subjects of His severest indignation, upon the earth. The consequences of identifying the seventh with the “last” trump are so disastrous that it behooves us to examine each more minutely and see if the accounts contain sufficient detail to establish their identity or distinctness, apart from any system of interpretation.

We have already noted the marked difference in the dispensation of grace and judgment. In His delight to deal out grace, He brooks no intermediaries or agents. In judgment, however, He stands back, and sends His messengers to execute His will. The seventh trumpet is sounded by a *messenger*. *Voices* in heaven proclaim the advent of the King and His kingdom. Not so when He comes for us. The Lord *Himself* will be descending from heaven with the shout of command, with the voice of the Chief Messenger, and with the trumpet of God (1 Thes. 4:16). The trumpet is indeed sounded by a Messenger, but it is the Lord Himself, not another. In all He has the pre-eminence. He is the Chief Messenger. His voice alone can wake the dead. His blast alone can change the living.

This fact forever fixes a chasm between the last trump and the seventh judgment blast. One is blown by the Lord Himself; the other is the trumpeting of His messenger. “*For* He will be trumpeting” (1 Cor. 15:52) is a statement which explains the foregoing without any reference to any trumpeting mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. It is a part of the secret there revealed.

But why is it called the *last* trump? This cannot be taken in an absolute sense, for even the seventh trumpet which ushers in the kingdom is not the last time a trumpet will be blown. In the temple ritual and the festivals

and jubilees, the redeemed earth will often hear the trumpet's tones. The seventh is the last of the series. So also the last trump is the last peal of a prolonged blast.

The insistence of the apostle on the point that our change will occur in a single instant of time has produced the impression that the whole procedure of His advent is instantaneous. On the contrary, we are distinctly told that the dead in Christ shall be rising *first*. There is a definite order to the rapid events of His presence. First comes the resurrection of the dead. Then the transfiguration of the living (Phil. 3:21). Then both, at the same time, shall be snatched away together (1 Thes. 4:17) for meeting the Lord in the air.

Time was, not long since, when the idea of a trumpet blast reaching all over the earth was accounted a silly superstition. Sound is very slow. Its speed is not much over a thousand feet a second. It would take the greater part of a day to reach every spot on earth from a given point. Its force is soon dissipated, so that the ear cannot hear it. How impossible that the saints should respond to its appeal in an instant of time! Faith would reason that it is just as impossible to wake the dead. To believe one and not the other would be irrational indeed.

But of late all such oppositions of pseudo science have been withdrawn. Sound can be carried at the speed of light and travel to the ends of earth in less than a tenth of a second. I have heard the merest whisper miles from where I was. I have listened to sounds fifteen hundred miles distant, which could not be heard across a street. It is no longer impossible for all the people in the United States to listen to one man speaking. The voice of the chief executive has been heard throughout the country. The voice of the German chancellor has been heard in practically the whole world. How easy, then, for the Lord to call His own!

Another interesting thought is suggested by recent experiments in sound. The question arises, how is it that the living are not changed by the *first* trump? Has it any peculiar qualities which differ from the last? Sound, as heard by human ears, is but a very small segment of that vast scale of vibrant energy which includes heat and light within its range. There are sounds we cannot hear. They are either too "low" or too "high". We can easily imagine that the first trump will be of such tremendous energy as to entirely surpass the capacity of the human ear. It will impart life to the dead. It will invest them with incorruptibility. Yet it seems to pass by the living. It may be that we who are living and surviving unto the presence of the Lord may not even hear the opening notes of that grand fanfare which closes our sojourn on earth. Not long since, high up in the mountains, a sudden turn in the road brought to our ears the closing notes of the reveille, sounding clear and strong from a camp in the forest. So sudden and so swift will be our welcome home.

We shall by no means outstrip those who are reposing in Christ (1 Thes. 4:15). The present apostasy makes this solemn assurance seem superfluous. If all "go to heaven when they die", what chance have we to outstrip them? Paul never sent anyone to heaven at death. He postponed that until the resurrection. To understand the last trump, however, we must remember that, instead of our outstripping the dead, they are first to respond to the trumpet call. They shall be rising *first*.

Another phase of the apostasy seeks to separate the saints at this point. We are told that many of the dead are raised years before others, who are still alive, will join them in the resurrection. Not so is the record. Both the raised and the living shall be snatched away together, *at the same time*, to meet the Lord in the air. Our versions, both Authorized and Revised, entirely ig-

nore this in their renderings. They probably thought that "together" would imply as much. But the spirit of God is very insistent on this point. The living and the raised are snatched up *at the same time, together*. The C. V. sublinear is SIMULTANEOUSLY TOGETHER. If there is redundancy here it is inspired. The present apostasy shows that it is needed.

The meaning of *hama*, the Greek word which is ignored in our versions, is clear from its first occurrence. In the parable of the wheat and the darnel (Mat. 13:24-30) the question arises. When shall the darnel be removed? If the darnel is culled out before the harvest, the wheat will be rooted up *at the same time*. This is the meaning of the archaic *withal*, which the A. V. uses thrice (Col. 4:3; 1 Tim. 5:13; Philem. 22) as the equivalent of *hama*.

Nothing associated with the seventh trumpet which ushers in the kingdom is present at the last trump. The Lord does not descend to the earth, no kingdom is set up, no judgment of the nations follows. Nothing associated with the last trump finds a place under the seven trumpets. No dead are raised, no living are changed. Under the trumpets many are killed, rather than raised. Israel's resurrection does not take place till forty-five days after the seventh trumpet sounds.

It is of prime importance that we identify the section of mankind affected by the seven trumpets if we wish to enter into God's thoughts concerning them. Such inflictions as these upon those who are "saved *for* grace" (Eph. 2:5) would be inexplicable. The saints of this economy are God's ambassadors, proclaiming peace, hence will have been withdrawn before this warfare commences. Even the faithful in Israel are sheltered from its fury. The hundred forty-four thousand and the vast throng are enabled to stand. Hence the seven trumpets deal specially with the nations, or gentiles, who have taken political possession of the earth. Certain it is that

they lose their political supremacy when the seventh trumpet ushers in the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ (11:15).

The seven trumpets are an expansion of the seventh seal, hence they deal with the double aspect of man's possession and rule of the earth. Just as the Lord, as the Son of Abraham, has the right to possess the promised land, and, as the Son of David, has the right to rule it, so the seals cope with the nations as countries, occupying the earth's surface, the trumpets deal with them as governments, sharing its power and rule.

In the last analysis, no nation has a right to its territory nor any government to its authority. There have been exceptions to this, as when God delegated rule to such men as Nebuchadnezzar, or when He gave Israel their land and chose their king. But there is not a nation today that can give a perfect title to any of its territory, or a valid basis for its authority. All of us are "squatters" or usurpers, living on Another's soil and defying His dominion.

I well remember the remark of a famous law specialist concerning the title to a piece of property. He declared that, in a large city whose valuation would reach to the billions, not a single title deed was incontestable. He did not go far into the past. Many of the land titles in the United States go back to patents from the King of England or to grants of the King of Spain. But what real right had they to the land they gave to others? If it be the "right of discovery" then anyone with sufficient power can "discover" anything in the possession of one weaker than himself and take it for his own.

William Penn saw this, and bought Pennsylvania both from the king and from the Indians. Yet, even so, what title had the Indians? Even if they had found it unused and untenanted by man, we are hardly prepared to admit that a vacant piece of property or one unused is subject to seizure by anyone who can hold it,

and that such a one can sell it to others and give a valid title.

No matter how many intervening steps there may be, we must finally come to the Psalmist's conclusion that the earth and that which fills it is the Lord's. When Israel dwelt in the land they acknowledged this by paying a tithe of its produce to sustain His worship. They were simply His tenants. Holding property in fee simple, or absolute ownership, is a fiction which will come to a sad end when the seven trumpets sound.

One of the most recent legal decisions may help us to see how reckless man can be in appropriating the property of His Creator. It is some time since it was decided that ownership in a piece of land was not limited to the surface but extended, as a converging cone, to the center of the earth. But that is very modest, indeed, compared to this latest decision, which extends these boundaries upward into space without limit. The imagination is unable to follow the full import of this. It is evident that the moon is continually trespassing on someone's property, and so is the sun, and Mars and Jupiter and all the planets and stars of space. Men are actually claiming the heavens as part of their "property"! God Himself must be a trespasser on their domains and should be evicted!

So also with government. The right to rule is divine, and no man can have it except as it is delegated to him by God. The great cry of this day is democracy, or the rule of the people. Republicanism is but a modified form of it. It has proved itself most unstable and corrupt, as all mere human government is bound to be. When the mass of mankind arrogates to itself the authority which is God's they soon desire independence, not only from earthly despotism, but divine sovereignty. So that today the most perfunctory acknowledgment of God is only tolerated as a superstition.

Democracy often ends in despotism and a dictator.

In times of stress a strong hand is needed at the helm of the ship of state and the crew is glad to obey the one who can steer them through the storm. So it was in Rome when Cæsar came upon the scene. So it will be in the time of the end, when the last great monarch of Christendom will accept from Satan the scepter that our Lord refused. He will take a definite stand against God and His authority and seek to banish Him from the earth. He will demand divine worship for himself. His success would mean the utter alienation of the earth from every divine influence. It would be a blight that would sink the whole in corruption and death.

Let on one imagine that these awful inflictions are merely the blind, vindictive rage of a furious god who would destroy what he cannot set right, whose only purpose is to punish his opponents. Grace may be unmeasured and overflowing, but judgment is always meted out with restraint. In scope and character it is suited to the correction and removal of evils far more serious than it is. Man's misrule will have come to a crisis where it is no longer tolerable to God or man. Severe, decisive measures are, in reality, a mercy. There can be no millennium without them.

This is the setting of the seven trumpets. Severe as the inflictions are, they fend the earth from a far worse fate. They remove the cause of its corruption. They cleanse and renew it for the righteous reign of the Son of Mankind.

The seven trumpets, like the seven seals, group themselves into four and three. The first four invoke the forces of nature, the last three introduce sentient, living creatures as the agents of destruction. The first four are indirect, the last three are direct inflictions on mankind. The first four affect a third of the earth, the sea, the rivers, and the air. The last three are the terrible woe trumpets, under which more than a third of mankind are killed.

These are the closing judgments on mankind as a whole before the kingdom is established. The judgments of the bowls are more severe, but are confined to the apostates of Israel. When the seventh trumpet sounds the kingdom comes. Indeed, the seventh trumpet consists of the judgments which take place in the kingdom itself.

The specific object of the seven trumpets is evident from the worship of the elders when they are finished. Jehovah has taken His great power and reigns. The nations were angry and He was indignant, so He blights those who are blighting the earth. As a result the prophets and the saints receive their awards and the earth becomes a part of the kingdom of the heavens.

We shall now consider the marvelous silence that precedes them, and their immediate cause, as well as the warfare of the elements in the first four inflictions, and the terrible woe trumpets, the supernatural locusts, the horrible cavalry, and the still sorer judgments of the kingdom which are not detailed in this book. We shall more deeply appreciate His grace to us as we see the awfulness of His wrath when He arises to terrify the earth.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 8:1-12

8 And when It opens the seventh seal, a hush occurred in heaven as it were half an hour.

²And I perceived the seven messengers who stand in God's sight, and seven trumpets were given to them.

³And another messenger came and was standing at the altar, having a golden thurible. And much incense was given him that he will be imparting to the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar in sight of the throne. ⁴And the fumes of the incense with the prayers of the saints ascended out of the messenger's hand in God's sight. ⁵And the messenger has taken the thurible, and he crams it with the fire of the altar and casts it into the earth. And thunders and voices and lightnings and an earthquake occurred.

⁶And the seven messengers who have the seven trumpets make themselves ready that they should be trumpeting.

⁷And the first trumpets. And there came to be hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was cast into the earth, and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

⁸And the second messenger trumpets. And as it were a huge mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood, ⁹and a third of the creatures which are in the sea, which have a soul, died, and a third of the ships decayed.

¹⁰And the third messenger trumpets. And a large star falls out of heaven, burning as a torch. And it falls on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹And the name of the star is said to be Absinth. And a third of the waters became absinth and many of mankind died of the waters, seeing that they were made bitter.

¹²And the fourth messenger trumpets. And a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were eclipsed, that a third of them may be darkened, and day should not be appearing for a third of it, and night likewise.

THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS

HITHERTO, from the time that John was called by a trumpet through the open door of heaven (4:1), our ears have been greeted by voices and thunders, by loud proclamations and the commands of the Lambkin, by the prayers of the saints and the petitions of the impenitent, by the marvelous melody of myriads of messengers and the ringing response of all creation.

Now there comes to be a hush in heaven for half an hour. The seventh seal is opened in silence. If we have intelligently followed the breaking of the seals it will not be difficult for us to hold our peace in breathless expectation. The seals which have been broken have been of tremendous import. But the sealing and sheltering of the sixth seal suggest that the most momentous events are yet to come. But one more seal remains. It must involve the consummation. When it is broken all we can do is to join the mute messengers and silent elders, and seek to understand this voiceless utterance, this hushed heralding, this stillness, more awful and full of premonitory import than if a thousand trumpets had flared forth in clamorous alarm.

But why the delay! Is not all ready? Yes, all the saints are sealed, the trumpets are prepared. Is not the full time come and judgment ripe for harvest? It is. The day of man is past, the judgment more than due. Why then the delay?

The rage of man is reckless, thoughtless, unrestrained. All that he cares for is to destroy the object of his hate. He will strike as soon as possible. What cares he for his enemy's regard?

But God's indignation is of an entirely different stamp. When His judgments are in the earth the inhabitants will learn righteousness. He makes deliberate haste and holds back His upraised hand.

To us this silent session in the very midst of judgment is the touch which transforms all these terrors from unreasoning, insatiate wrath to careful, calculated indignation, designed to deal out righteousness, not merely unrestrained revenge.

It will be noted that this hush in heaven is in contrast to the trumpet blasts which follow. From death-like silence comes the thunder's reverberating roll and the trumpet's loud alarm. It is the stillness before the storm. If the trumpets peal forth His indignation, the silence speaks of His kindness. In wrath He remembers mercy (Hab. 3:2). The pause is brief, but it is eloquent. It bids us remember that the terrific tragedies which follow are not so much as tinged with malice, that they are not only right but rectifying, and, in their final result, but another manifestation of His goodness.

The seven seals were broken by the Lambkin Itself. The trumpets are blown by seven messengers. As the opening of the seventh seal involves the seven trumpets, we may easily identify the seven messengers with the seven horns of the Lambkin, which are the seven spirits of God, commissioned for the entire earth (5:6). As we have already seen, the saints of this present administration of grace are members of Christ's body, and, as such, will be His agents in disseminating the knowledge of the transcendent riches of God's grace among the celestials in the coming eons. So also, the Lambkin is composite, including not only Christ, but the seven messengers who are Its horns and eyes. As the horns of an

animal are its aggressive weapons of destruction, so these seven messengers are His agents in the trumpet judgments.

But before the trumpets sound, God once more guards His character by showing us the immediate motive of the ensuing judgments. Under the fifth seal He heard the prayers of the saints for vengeance on their oppressors. To these we may add the petitions of those who were not persecuted, for He taught them to pray, "Thy kingdom come!" If the kingdom is to come and His elect are to be avenged, the trumpets must sound. The whole of the judgments are aptly symbolized by the action of the messenger at the golden altar. He is given much incense, that sweet smelling compound which speaks of the varied and delightful excellences of Christ, which he offers with the faulty prayers of His people. The effect is twofold. The vapor ascends to God, and provides the motive for His judgments. The result is that the messenger crams his thurible with fire and flings it to the earth, to symbolize the source of earth's woes.

Men cannot touch His saints without attacking Him. He is bound to support their cause. The supernatural, terrorizing trumpet judgments are His response to the petition of His saints and His reply to the rebellion of mankind.

THE FIRST TRUMPET

At the first trumpet hail and fire mixed with blood are cast into the earth. As a result a third of the earth, with the trees and grass, are burned.

The deliverance of the saints has many a parallel with the exodus out of Egypt and the plagues that preceded it. The first plague was of blood (Ex. 7:14-25). It turned all the waters into blood. Here, however, it is not the waters which are turned to blood, but what would correspond to the rain on the earth. The third

trumpet deals with the waters. This one is confined to the earth.

Occasionally, mankind has been startled by the appearance of red rain or red snow, and expositors have eagerly seized on this to "explain" this infliction. But such a spectacular farce will not be staged to interest or amuse mankind when the time of His indignation comes. The blood in Egypt was not colored water, but dreadful, deadly, detestable gore.

The seventh Egyptian plague was hail and fire mingled with the hail (Ex. 9:13-35). This corresponds closely with this infliction. The Egyptians were warned and sought protection. At the sounding of the seventh trumpet this will be repeated on a grander scale and with a fiercer fire. The Egyptians seem to have suffered little from the fire, but here it is the chief agent of destruction.

Men little realize how combustible earth's vegetation is until a dry summer turns it to tinder and it begins to burn almost without cause. A single lightning stroke can lay a vast forest in ashes. But a few weeks before this is written miles upon miles of mountain land were burned over and millions of dollars damage was done by the dropping of a match, not quite extinguished. What a lurid, smoking inferno this earth will be when the heavens drop down fire and a third of its surface is swept by the devouring flames!

I well remember an experience of my own in fighting a mountain fire, or, rather, what threatened to become such. Some smouldering embers, thought to be dead, suddenly started to life and a gust of wind swept a flicker to a nearby bush. In a moment a flame flared high and another bush was blazing. Left alone, it would be but a few minutes before the whole canyon would be ablaze and the whole mountain beyond a seething sea of flame. So I hastily seized some wet sacks and attacked the wind-whirled waves of angry, crackling fire. It seemed

impossible to get near enough to strike without being swallowed up by the flames. Yet in some way—how, I hardly know—the fire was checked at the canyon's mouth, but it left me so exhausted that it was a week before I was myself again.

On another occasion I rode through a forest which had recently been burned over. The ground was black and hot with ashes. The tree tops were still aflame in many places. Little imagination was needed to picture the fearful fury of the flames when they are roused to fight the forest.

But I have noticed that the green grass does not burn. It is seared and scorched at times, but only in the hottest fire. Flames fly upward. Heat rises. The ground and the grass suffer from the radiant heat, but are not burned like that which lies in the path of the flames. But in that dreadful day the fire will be so fierce as to burn the very earth and completely consume the greenest of the grass.

The surface of this earth will receive a scorching such as it has never had since man has come upon the scene. At times a region, such as Sodom's sinful vale, is incinerated in the flames. But after this ordeal is past, one-third of earth's surface lies a smouldering shroud of ashes beneath a somber pall of smoke.

THE SECOND TRUMPET

The second trumpet shifts the scene from the land to the sea. Instead of a barrage of hail, the artillery of heaven bombards with an enormous mountain-like meteor, which falls into the ocean. A mountain burning with fire may describe a volcano, but the simile suggests that it is *not* a mountain, but a mass of matter which looks like one. Indeed, the fire does not seem to be of great moment. Nothing is burned, but it seems to be quenched in the waters of the sea. It may have an important office in the divine chemistry which converts

a third of the water into blood, and poisons the soul life of the sea and speedily spoils the shipping.

To most men such a thing seems incredible. The vast mass of the waters, the enormous extent of the visitation—these are not easy for the human mind to imagine. But such matters are simply questions of comparison. Our standard is too tiny. If we allow, for the nonce, the usually accepted figures for the size of the earth and the depth of the sea, the water becomes a relatively small portion of the whole. If a miniature earth about three feet in diameter were plunged into water, the thin film which adheres when it is withdrawn would represent the waters of the sea. It would be nothing for a man to replace a third of this with blood. Why then should we doubt God's declaration that He will merge the meteor and the sea and make them blood? Moses did this with the waters of Egypt with no medium but his staff. Even the magicians accomplished it (Ex. 7: 19-22). It is no feat for God.

Cannot He Who made the sea change the character of its waters? If God is going to impress mankind with His power and righteousness it would be useless to repeat the marvels which greet them every day. His acts must be stupendous and unnatural and terrifying. Fire and blood are the very synonyms of war. To these are being added noxious gas, and this also finds its place under the third trumpet. The earth will be charred by fire and bathed in blood and poisoned by gas.

THE THIRD TRUMPET

It is well known that the words which we translate "earth" and "land" do not include the sea or the lakes and rivers. It means land in its exclusive sense. So it will be seen that the springs and rivers have not been touched by the first two trumpets. Hence this is the sphere of the third.

None of the trumpets seems so easily understood as

this infliction. A star, burning as a torch, seems a most graphic description of a comet. The migratory movements of such stars makes it not only possible but extremely probable that one will collide with the earth at some time. Indeed, some have insisted that the earth has already passed through the tail of such a star.

Their extremely tenuous nature can be verified by anyone who has observed them. They are quite transparent, so that the fixed stars may be seen through their far-flung streamers. They must, therefore, be composed of gas, and the result of a collision would be precisely that indicated. There would be no impact, no shock, as if a solid mass had struck the earth. Its effect on the land seems to be unworthy of note.

Water, especially pure spring water, has a great affinity for some gases and eagerly absorbs them. Hence the chief effect of the scourging star is to turn the drinking water into a death potion. Absinth, or wormwood, is a bitter herb, intoxicating and fatal if used too freely. It produces convulsions, paralysis and death. A third of the supply of water for mankind is transformed from the most healthful and beneficial of fluids into a potent poison, and many of mankind drink, are overcome, and die of the bitter waters.

THE FOURTH TRUMPET

Thus far the devastating judgments have destroyed man's means of living. The trees and herbage are burned, the fish are destroyed, the water is poisoned. Earth is not a pleasant place to live in when a large part of the bare necessities are destroyed or deal out death instead of fostering life. But the sun, the source of life, still shines, and the moon gleams bright, and the stars still sparkle in the heavenly vault. Here, then is the sphere of the fourth infliction. Heaven from above, as well as earth beneath, contributes to the consternation of mankind.

Those beneficent heavenly orbs which give us light and warmth, on which all growth depends, retire behind a sable curtain as though ashamed to look on such a scene, and add their share to the chilling misery and sickening gloom.

Thus mankind is enveloped in heaven-sent calamities that men may learn the long forgotten lesson taught to Nebuchadnezzar when the nations were first given the sovereignty of the earth. "The heavens do rule" is written on its face with fire and blood and it is traced upon the heavens themselves in dismal characters.

But the hand of judgment is restrained. Two-thirds remains untouched. Had all these inflictions been world-wide, as well they might, who would be left? No food, no water, no light—no creatures could exist for long in such a case. Judgment is measured, and dares not break beyond the bounds assigned by Him Whose strange work it is. Severe as it seems, it is always but a fraction of its potential force. Were it the blind rage of a heartless autocrat, what would hinder him from exterminating mankind with one fell stroke? But the trumpets are sounded by the horns of the Lambkin, Who Himself has known a scene very like to this. Fire from above burned into His bones, blood flowed from His veins, a darkness shadowed Golgotha. We may well leave the justice of this judgment in His hands!

The first four trumpets are thus briefly told. But the last three are described with much more detail. There is much to come before us before the seventh trumpet's blast, which ushers in the kingdom. So horrible are these inflictions that they well deserve to be called woes. The fifth trumpet is the first woe. The sixth is the second. Then we hear the seven thunders interpose with their frightful reverberations. Then the temple on mount Zion is measured, and becomes the nucleus of the coming kingdom. Next we consider the testimony of the two witnesses, their superhuman powers, their disgraceful

death and their triumphal ascension. And then comes that great event, for which the world has waited since the flood, when government was first entrusted to the hands of men. The kingdom of this world finally falls into the hands of Him Whose right it is, Who alone can heal its mortal wound and bring peace to a war-worn world.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 8:13-9:12

¹³And I perceived, and I hear one vulture flying in mid-heaven saying with a loud voice: *"Woe! woe! woe! to those dwelling on the earth as a result of the rest of the soundings of the trumpets of the three messengers who are about to be trumpeting!"*

9 And the fifth messenger trumpets. And I perceived a star falling out of heaven into the earth. And to him was given the key of the well of the abyss. ²And he opens the well of the abyss, and fumes ascended out of the well as the smoke of a large furnace, and the sun and the air are darkened by the fumes of the well. ³And out of the fumes came forth locusts into the earth, and license was granted them as the scorpions of the earth have license. ⁴And it was declared to them that they should not be injuring the grass of the earth, nor any green thing at all, nor any tree at all, except those of mankind who have not the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵And it was granted to them, not that they may be killing them, but that they shall be tormented five months; and their torment is as the torment of a scorpion, whenever it should be striking a man. ⁶And in those days mankind will be seeking death, and under no circumstances shall they be finding it. And they will be yearning to die, and death is fleeing from them. ⁷And the likenesses of the locusts are like horses made ready for battle, and on their heads are as it were wreaths like gold, and their faces are as it were human faces, ⁸and they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth are as if they were lions'. ⁹And they had cuirasses, as it were iron cuirasses, and the sound of their wings is as the sound of many chariot horses racing into battle. ¹⁰And they have tails like scorpions, and stings, and their license is to injure mankind five months with their tails. ¹¹They have a king over them—the messenger of the abyss. His name is Abaddon, and in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

¹²One woe passed away. *Lo!* Two woes still are coming after these things.

THE WOE TRUMPETS

THE first four trumpets summon the inanimate forces of nature to wreak vengeance on mankind; the last three are inflicted by living agents. The hail, the fire, and the blood, the burning mountain, the torch-like star, the eclipse of heaven's luminaries—these give place to the more direct and disastrous inflictions of the scorpion locusts, the infernal cavalry, the two witnesses, and the judgments of Christ Himself at His appearing. So terrible are these visitations that they are named the “woe trumpets” and call forth a special note of warning before they are sounded.

John saw a single vulture in mid-heaven saying with a loud voice: “*Woe! woe! woe! to those dwelling on the earth as a result of the rest of the soundings of the trumpets of the three messengers who are about to be trumpeting!*” (8:13).

The fell significance of this is lost if we render this *eagle* in place of vulture, or follow the discredited reading *angel*. None of the best editors read *messenger*, or *angel*. The manuscripts on which the Concordant Version is based do not even contain this reading. It is far more likely that some manuscripts would be altered to *angel*, than that *angel* should be changed to *vulture*.

The Hebrew *nesher* and Greek *aetos* are undoubtedly the names given to the great griffon vulture which is a distinctive feature of the landscape of Palestine. Eagles are rare and do not answer to the description and char-

acteristics of this lord of the air. The head of a vulture is bald, as we read in Micah (1:16). Not so the eagle. A carcase might call few eagles, but may gather hundreds of vultures (Mat. 24:28). Eagles are solitary in their habits, but vultures congregate. A single vulture is apt to be a hungry one, out after prey.

The significance of a *single* vulture is not difficult to discover. Who has seen a bird of prey parleying and hovering over a certain spot without an unuttered *woe!* to the hapless creature beneath? Many a man in dread of death in the wild spaces of the earth has shuddered at sight of a circling scavenger who is patiently waiting till it can pick his bones. To such straits has mankind come that a vulture is preparing to pounce upon its carcase. It is the harbinger of *death*.

Hitherto *many* have been killed. In the fearful inflictions that follow probably *most* of mankind will fall a prey to the vultures. The second woe accounts for a full third, and the third woe may take even a greater toll of life. Here we see but one vulture. At the close of three woes God will make a great dinner for all the birds of prey and they shall feast on the flesh of the slain and be satiated (19:17-21).

We find it impossible to sympathize with the thought, which has so often been put forth in this connection, that this "eagle" is a symbol of the saints, and that *we* are to pronounce these woes upon mankind at this crisis. We feel like saying to such as suppose this to be our task, You know not the spirit He has given us! As members of the body of Christ we are undoubtedly the instruments for the execution of His will. The saints shall judge, or rule, the world. But not all the saints have the same function. We are totally unfit for such work as is delegated to this vulture. Ours is a higher, a nobler sphere. We do not deal out judgment on the earth but herald the heights of grace to the heavenly hosts.

THE FIFTH TRUMPET

The fifth trumpet brings judgment from beneath. The abyss is opened and vomits a vast volume of smoke, out of which emerge such creatures as earth has never yet known. They cannot kill, but they are licensed to torture mankind for five months.

The well leading down to the abyss is opened by a messenger who is represented as a star, fallen from heaven. And here it behooves us to tread carefully. It is the common tendency to ascribe all evil to Satan, and this picture of a *fallen star* seems too much of a temptation for some expositors. Satan is not the only instrument of evil that God uses. In this very vision Apollyon appears at the head of the horde of locusts. His very name is *Destruction*, yet he surely is not identical with Satan.

Satan is seen in this Unveiling as the enemy of the *saints*. He is not by any means engaged in afflicting his own subjects. The locusts cannot touch the saints, who have the seal of God on their foreheads. Why should Satan torment those who are true to him? We may be sure that, if he is the fallen star, he would never unlock the well of the abyss. The figment that he tortures his dupes in hell is as false as it is foolish. Neither does he in any way encourage or direct the actions of Apollyon or his locusts. The fallen star is a messenger of God, and appears in obedience to the trumpet call of the angel who is one of the horns of the Lambkin.

There is a gruesome fascination about such subjects as the abyss, its messenger Apollyon, and the grotesque creatures which come up from its depths. In creating the mediæval "hell", the imaginary features of Gehenna, Tartarus and the lake of fire were all combined to make a lurid illusion. But even these were not sufficient, so the abyss and Apollyon were introduced as added features. It is only as we distinguish all these that we may arrive at the truth. Satan probably has never been

in the abyss, and certainly never makes it a part of his sovereignty. Rather, it is the place to which he is banished, the prison from which he is unable to escape during the thousand years.

A study of the passages in which the abyss is mentioned will convince us that it is always associated with the waters of the earth. After the disruption, darkness was on the face of the abyss (Gen. 1:2). The springs of the abyss were broken up at the flood (Gen. 7:11; 8:2). We read of the *waters* of the great deep, or abyss (Isa. 51:10). With this corresponds the phrase here used—the *well* of the abyss. It is not, as the common version always renders it in this book, a *bottomless pit*, but the shaft of a *well*, leading down to water. Our Lord drank of the water from such a *well* (John 4:11, 12).

But how can *smoke* come out of a *well*? The old adage assures us that where there is smoke there must be fire. But this is not necessarily the case. This word is usually used of the smoke from fire, but includes the thought of *fumes*, or smoke-like manifestations. On several occasions the temple was filled with smoke which came from no fire but Jehovah's jealousy (Deut. 29:20; Isa. 6:4; Un. 15:8). It is an index of the anger of the Lord (Psa. 74:1). It is translated *be angry* in Psalm 80:4. We use the same figure in the verb *to fume*.

The smoke or fumes and the locusts with which it swarms, are supernatural. The smoke tells us that the very earth is *fuming* with indignation against the irreverent.

The locusts that came upon the land of Egypt at the exodus were not the usual kind. "Before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such" (Ex. 10:14). Yet they were ever so much more like other kinds than those which are sent under the fifth trumpet. They ate all the herbs and fruit and green things (Ex. 10:15), but the locusts from the abyss do not even injure the grass, or any tree or any green

thing. Indeed, it is not clear at first why they should be called locusts. They are not such in appearance or habits.

There is, however, a dread parallel which can be appreciated fully only by those who have known the devastation that follows their advent. Their number is often appalling. In Egypt they were to be so thick that they completely hid the ground. I once had an interesting experience while riding on horseback through a wild region of California. At my approach hundreds of locusts would fly into the air and many flew into my face. I dared not open my mouth and could only squint through a narrow slit of nearly closed eyes. I thought their number incredible. But when I was about to alight from my horse among some tall grass I was struck with the peculiar color of the ground and it seemed to be in motion. What was my astonishment to find that it was a solid mass of young green locusts! And this was in a land where they seldom do much damage. An occasional insect of this kind is no hardship. Their number is what makes them so appalling. This is the probable reason why this scourge is called by their name.

In the second woe we are told that the number of the horsemen is two hundred millions. That is probably one third the population of the earth. But if the comparison between locusts and horses is any index of their relative number, there will be untold billions of these locusts, more than sufficient for every man, woman and child in the world. There will be no possible escape from them.

These locusts correspond to the natural ones in the length of their season. This lasts from May to September, about five months. On the other hand, we are specially informed that locusts have no king (Prov. 30: 27), but these hordes will be marshaled under the banner of Apollyon, their king, the messenger of the abyss.

Scorpions are a scourge in themselves, though they are neither numerous nor winged, like locusts. I once

dug down an old lime kiln which seemed to be a favorite abode of theirs. Each time I pried off a brick or stone I had to beware lest one be lurking under it. I could never become accustomed to the horrid creatures with their crab-like claws and long tails curved back above them, always ready to strike. There is no insect I dread more than a scorpion.

What a monstrous and dreadful combination when God supplies the locust hordes with scorpions' tails! What escape is possible from scorpions in such numbers and with wings, and, under the direction of Apollyon, bent on sinking their stings into every human being which is devoid of the divine seal? No wonder that, in those days, mankind will seek relief in death. But, though the scorpion's sting is unutterably painful it is not necessarily fatal. And, under this trumpet, men are denied even the boon of death. For five months mankind must bear the terrible torment.

There seems to be an intended contrast between these creatures and the cherubim. Both are composites, made up from the various realms of animal creation. From the wild beasts both use the lion, but the locusts have only its teeth. From the domestic animals the cherubim choose the bullock, the other has the horse, which, in the orient, was used almost exclusively for war. Both have the face of a man.

For the vulture, soaring on high to meet the sun, is substituted the devastating locust and venomous scorpion. In the cherubim we have the symbols of sovereignty, in the locusts we have a composite which speaks of devastation and ruin. No wonder their king is named Apollyon or Abaddon, for they seem to be equipped for no other purpose than "destruction". In glorious contrast to him, He Who sits in the midst of the cherubim is named Salvation, for His name signifies the salvation of Jehovah.

God is supposed to torment all the wicked for eter-

nity, in death. How contrary is this woe! Here, indeed, is torment, but it is limited in time and it is confined to the living. From the popular viewpoint it cannot be understood. Why seek release from temporal torment if it only leads to eternal woe? And why keep them from dying, if this is no escape? Terrible as are these scenes, they are mild compared to the caricature of the Deity which passes current in apostate Christendom.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 9:13-21

¹³And the sixth messenger trumpets. And I hear one voice out of the horns of the golden altar which is in God's sight, ¹⁴saying to the sixth messenger who has the trumpet: "Loose the four messengers who have been bound at the great Euphrates river." ¹⁵And the four messengers were loosed, who have been made ready for the hour and the day and the month and the year, that they may be killing a third of mankind. ¹⁶And the number of the troops of cavalry was two hundred millions—I hear their number. ¹⁷And thus I perceived the horses in the vision, and those who are sitting on them, having fiery and amethystine and sulphurous cuirasses; and the heads of the horses are as the heads of lions, and out of their mouths are issuing fire and fumes and sulphur. ¹⁸By these three calamities the third of mankind were killed: by the fire, and the fumes and the sulphur, which is issuing out of their mouths. ¹⁹For the license of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents, having heads, and with them they are injuring. ²⁰And the rest of mankind who were not killed in these calamities repent not of the acts of their hands—that they will not be worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and copper and stone and wood, which are not able to be observing nor to be hearing nor to be walking—²¹and they repent not of their murders, nor of their enchantments, nor of their prostitution, nor of their thefts.

THE SECOND WOE

THE sixth trumpet is the second woe. The woes are distinguished from the preceding trumpets not only by the intensity of the inflictions but by their character and the means of the divine indignation. The inanimate creation was marshaled against mankind in the first four trumpets, but the hosts of the unseen world are arrayed against them in the woes. The sixth trumpet looses the four messengers, or angels, bound at the great river Euphrates. The most malignant of man's enemies are in the spirit sphere. Little does he realize that, even at this moment, God is holding in leash such terrible agents of destruction that even man's most vaunted death machines cannot compare with them.

All over the earth mankind is talking peace and preparing for war. The most important question before each great government is the adequacy of its forces to meet the latest advances in warfare. The advent of a new weapon may make obsolete armaments which cost many millions. The question whether the next great war will be fought on land, in or on the sea, or in the air, has stirred militarism to its core. But, while man's highest aim and most expensive luxury is the killing of his fellows, the spirit world is mobilizing an army which will make all his guns and gases, battleships and submarines, airplanes and dirigibles, a costly pile of junk.

The weak point in all human preparations is that men are totally ignorant of the plans of their enemies

(though they are plainly revealed in this Unveiling), and are helpless in the face of fighting machines which they cannot destroy, and against which they have provided no protection. There are four messengers, or angels, who have been made ready for the destruction of a third of humankind, and no armament on earth is equipped to touch them or their army. And it is all the more remarkable that this should be so, for they use cavalry, a branch of human warfare which is almost obsolete, and which no one would consider very effective in the face of modern machinery of destruction.

Before we can intelligently understand this, the most terrible of all the trumpets, we must inquire into the significance of the golden altar and its horns, whence proceeds the command to loose the four messengers. Abel's *blood* cried to God against Cain. Of course, blood cannot actually speak, but God heard its silent cry. The sin of Cain was symbolized by his brother's blood, and all who have ears can still hear its echo. The religion of Cain is the worldwide worship of today. In the same way the horns of the golden altar raise a cry of protest and invoke vengeance on the apostate world. The religion of the nations is brought into judgment under the sixth trumpet.

There were two altars in Israel, the brazen altar, in the court, outside the tabernacle or the temple, on which the sacrifices were offered, and the golden altar of incense, which stood before the vail or curtain, inside the holy place. It had four horns (Ex. 30:2, 3, 10; 37:25, 26). The blood of the sin-offering was put upon these horns, when it was a bullock for the errors of a priest (Lev. 4:7), or a young bullock for the congregation (Lev. 4:18). In some other cases it was put upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering (Lev. 4:25, 30, 34).

On the day of atonement, or shelter, the chief priest took of the blood of the bullock and of the goat of the sin-offering which is for the people, and he put it on

the horns of the altar which is before Jehovah (Lev. 16: 18). Among a cattle-keeping people, the offensive strength of an animal was well expressed by a reference to its horns. Throughout the eighth of Daniel the effective military forces of the Medo-Persian and Grecian empires are figured by the horns of the ram and the goat. When the time comes for the daughter of Zion to thresh the nations, Jehovah will make her horn iron, so that she will beat in pieces many peoples (Mic. 4: 13). The horns of a people, like that of a beast, are its offensive power. But what is symbolized by the horns of the altar?

The altar itself is a symbol of worship. When the third bowl is poured out on those who have shed the blood of saints and prophets, a voice is heard from the altar, saying: "Yea, Lord God, Almighty, true and just are Thy judgments" (16: 7). The horns of the altar represent the power which enforces its demands, which executes its judgments.

God demands the homage of all hearts, Jew and gentile, not only Israel, but the nations also. The succeeding section of this Unveiling (11: 19-20: 15) deals with Israel's failure to worship Him. Here we have the judgment due the nations for their departure from God. The first and foremost charge against them is the worship of demons and idols (9: 20). This is a grave offense against the golden altar where all true worship ascends with the incense of Christ's sacrifice. It must be righted by the horns of the altar.

The first voice in this section of the Unveiling comes out of the *throne* (4: 5), because dominion is its dominant note. Yet the kingdom to be established over the nations is a priest kingdom, and will demand worship as well as subjection. Hence this, the last judgment before the kingdom comes, deals with the religion of the nations and destroys it. This is a very different matter from the next section. There the first voice comes out of the tem-

ple (11:19), and the judgments are on the people of the covenant and their religious apostasy. They have not worshiped demons or bowed down to idols, as the nations have done.

It is always highly instructive to note carefully whence the voices come in this unveiling. Those under the fifth seal come from beneath the brazen altar, hence from victims who have been slain in sacrifice. The nations are judged for their anti-Semitism (6:10). A vulture is chosen to announce the woe trumpets (8:13). The last bowl is accompanied by a voice out of the temple (16:17). It is entirely fitting, then, that a voice from the horns of the golden altar should call for judgment on the abominations of the nations.

It is a grave error to suppose that the only super-human religion is that given by God. The religions of the nations are not of human origin, nor are their gods mere myths of the imagination. Paul insists that what the nations are sacrificing they are sacrificing to demons (1 Cor. 10:20). He says there are many gods (1 Cor. 8:5), though, for us, there is but One. Behind their idols of gold and silver and copper and stone and wood are the unseen yet potent powers of darkness.

Men fondly imagine that idol worship is on the wane and will soon be relegated to the limbo of religious superstitions. But quite the opposite is the truth. At the time of the end the great image set up by the second wild beast will command the worship of all but a few of mankind. It will not be able to observe or hear or walk, but it will be able to speak and to kill all who will not worship it (Un. 13:14, 15). Comparatively few of mankind do not worship demons under some form or other. Spiritism is the purest form of approach to the unseen world, but it is by no means limited to its devotees. The mass of mankind bow down to demons instead of giving God the glory which is His due.

The religious organizations of the world are the most

prolific breeding places of sin. We must never forget that the heads of the only divine religion were guilty of the most heinous of all crimes. Not the Roman governor, but the Jewish chief priests crucified the Christ. But if the most exalted men in that God-given ritual committed the greatest of all sins, what can we expect of those who follow the cult of the demons? The second woe comes on them because, *as demon worshipers*, they are guilty of murder and enchantment and prostitution and theft. The coloring of the context assures us that these are considered as the accompaniments of religion, a part of the ritual, sins sanctified and sacred.

Everyone who has any acquaintance with priestcraft, from that in so-called Christian communions to the medicine men of the most degraded tribes of central Africa, will readily agree that murder is a matter of common occurrence in such sacred circles. Almost all enchantment, sorcery, necromancy, thaumaturgy, and fetishism is found allied with religion. Prostitution is still, as in ancient days, their strongest lure to holy living. The unspeakable vices of Mecca, one of the world's most sacred cities, is only one example of the ethics of demon-directed worship. And as for thefts, is not all priestcraft organized to get, when it has nothing to give?

It is striking to note, in this Unveiling, how messengers or "angels" are given special jurisdiction over definite departments of the divine operations. Four have control of the winds (7:1), Abaddon is the messenger of the abyss (9:11). Then there is the messenger of the waters (16:5). He probably has charge of the river Euphrates, at which these four messengers are bound. The question arises, What jurisdiction is accorded these bound messengers? They are quite distinct from the messenger of the waters, and besides, their judgments do not fall on the rivers, but on mankind.

Their number seems to suggest that mankind is divided into four divisions, with one messenger over

each, This, coupled with the introduction of the golden altar, is the key to their particular part in the judgments of the end time. There are only four great religions in the world, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism and Christianity. For each there is a messenger of destruction being prepared. The doom of each has been decreed, and only awaits the destined moment. The sixth messenger will loose the four messengers, and they will rid the earth of all its Christless Christianity and Godless religions.

Before this time the members of the body of Christ will have been received up into glory. But that event will by no means be the end of Christendom. Perhaps its devotees of that day will feel relieved that so many of the uninfluential but troublesome adherents of the church have disappeared, for they were a constant hindrance to progress. Christianity has its messenger, waiting to unleash his horrid hosts upon the heads of the apostate "church".

It is not at all unlikely that the fury of this infliction will be felt especially by all those who are associated with the religions of the world, from the popes, bishops and priests, down to the despicable beggars who ask for alms in the name of their gods. Since one-third of mankind are killed, the judgment must needs reach those who are the greatest sinners against the golden altar.

There are more than a billion inhabitants on earth today. The severe inflictions which have preceded this have probably taken toll of nearly half, leaving six hundred millions still alive. The number of troops of cavalry is two hundred millions, just one-third. Hence it seems that every horseman will find his victim. Could the armies of any country kill so effectively today, the world would soon become an unpeopled waste.

There is no need to "explain" the various features of the formidable cavalry. We could tell of the guesses that have been made, but we have no desire to turn the

terrible tragedy here unfolded into a theological comedy. Taken literally, all is easy to understand. But if we turn each horse into a cannon, belching forth smoke and flame and sulphur (but no shot!), we will need at least four horses to pull each one, besides a gun crew, and we will be compelled to create horses and men by the billion before we are through.

The horses are real; the riders are real. The locusts of the previous calamity came from beneath. The prominence of sulphur in the cuirasses and the breath of these monstrosities suggests a like origin. The soil of the ground is that part which is suffused with oxygen so that it is prepared to support life. But just beneath is the sphere of sulphation, which will kill vegetation. It is predominantly sulphurous. So that this infliction comes from the neighborhood of the abyss.

Nothing is said of the horsemen except that they are covered with a coat of mail which is not only impermeable to human attack, but fatal to life in a close encounter. No man can approach them. Probably no weapon can wound them. The ingenuity of man has exhausted itself in devising means to massacre men, but the hyacinthine armor of these horsemen is proof against their projectiles. The latest and most deadly device, the loosing of lethal gas, and projection of fiery flames, will not even bring discomfort to them, for they themselves are the incarnation of these most ghastly means of murder.

Of all creatures, horses are the most appropriate for this scene, for they were used almost exclusively for military purposes in the Orient. But, as they encounter those who, in another connection, are described as ferocious wild beasts, of whom a horse would be afraid, each is given the head of a lion, before whom all other animals tremble. The bear, the lion, the leopard and the non-descript (13:2) are confronted with the lion-headed horses, belching forth the flames and fumes of death. Even this is most appropriate. Just as the deadly gases

stifle the physical breath, so the doctrines of demons, promulgated by the false religions of today, stifle the life of the spirit. Though these judgments seem so terrible, they are really not so awful as the spiritual asphyxiation to which we have become accustomed, and which has taken its toll by the billion for the last two millennia.

Perhaps no other elements are so suggestive of religious ritual as fire and smoke and sulphur. Fire is sacred in many cults, and fumes (which are a kind of smoke) arise before many a shrine. In ancient times sulphur was most closely connected with religious rites, and was considered a necessary purifier in their lustrations. Its very name *theion* is the neuter of *theios*, which means *divine*. Is it not striking that these sacred elements, which have such a place in dead religion, should be used to kill its devotees?

The same coincidence is seen in the serpent tails. Many religions deify the dragon, and propitiate it as the creator of evil. Even Christendom is guilty of this error. Besides its triple pantheon, it includes Satan as a rival deity, whose realms, in the end, will be far more populous than the kingdom of God. Some of the nations openly worship the dragon now. I have seen a Chinese dragon, hundreds of feet in length, mounted on the shoulders of many men, carried through the streets of a great Christian city amidst much wonder and applause on the part of those who should have known its sinister significance.

There is a good reason why some snakes are so venomous. They are no more so than their spiritual counterpart. In countries where they live and abound one can easily understand how the unenlightened mind would first fear and finally venerate such a creature. And especially am I impressed with the fitness of the serpent to be the symbol of Satan, with its stealthy approach, its hypnotic fascination, its swift stroke, its deadly venom.

It is not intimated here that the serpents are the immediate cause of death to anyone. Indeed, the bite of a snake is never fatal at first. It is a poison, slow, insidious, but deadly in the end, unless an antidote is taken or the poison drawn out before it enters the circulation. Is not this the case with the nations of the world who worship the image of the wild beast? Not only a third are killed by the horsemen at this time, but all who receive the emblem of the wild beast are bitten by the serpents, and get their death by fire and smoke and sulphur at a later time (14:9, 10).

This, it seems, will be the supreme test of the effect of severe infliction as a method of producing repentance. It conclusively proves that no such means will ever turn the human heart to God. The rest of mankind, who were not killed, persist in their idolatry and devotion to demons, and all the wickedness which follows in its wake.

The sixth trumpet details the destruction of the four great world religions. These can have no place in the kingdom of God and of Christ. The whole conflict is essentially superhuman, though men are the pawns on the board. Behind human religions are the demons whom they deify. Against them are the four messengers and their horrible horsemen. Demonism is given its death stroke, though it is not done away until the seventh trumpet sounds and the last woe works havoc with the hosts of unrepentant humanity.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 10:1-11

10 And I perceived another strong messenger descending out of heaven clothed with a cloud, and the rainbow on his head, and his face as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire, ²and having a tiny opened scroll in his hand. And he places his right foot on the sea, yet the left on the land. ³And he cries with a loud voice, even as a lion is bellowing.

And when he cries, the seven thunders speak with their own voices. ⁴And when the seven thunders speak, I was about to be writing. And I hear a voice out of heaven saying: "Seal what things the seven thunders speak", and "You should not be writing them."

⁵And the messenger whom I perceived standing on the sea and on the land lifts his right hand to heaven ⁶and swears by Him Who is living for the eons of the eons, Who creates heaven and that which is in it, and the earth and that which is in it, and the sea and that which is in it, that there will be no longer delay, ⁷but in the days of the seventh messenger's voice, whenever he may be about to be trumpeting, the secret of God is consummated also, as He evangelizes to His own slaves and the prophets.

⁸And the voice which I hear out of heaven speaks again with me, and is saying: "Go, get the tiny scroll which is opened in the hand of the messenger who stands on the sea and on the land." ⁹And I came away to the messenger, saying to him to give me the tiny scroll. And he is saying to me, "Take it and devour it; and it will be making your bowels bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." ¹⁰And I took the tiny scroll out of the messenger's hand, and devoured it. And in my mouth it was sweet as honey. And when I ate it, my bowels were made bitter. ¹¹And they are saying to me: "You must prophesy again as to peoples and nations and languages and many kings."

THE SEVEN THUNDERS

THE sixth trumpet is still sounding. Its effect on the votaries of the world religions has been described. They are the object of the most fearful supernatural visitations that this world will ever see. Their religions are superhuman and their judgment corresponds. But what of the one divine religion and the earthly people of God during this period? Are they included in the scope of the second woe? The destruction of false worship must necessarily have a powerful effect on the true. This we have presented to us in the vision of the strong messenger, the tiny scroll, and the seven thunders (10:1-11).

This is suggested to us in the words "I perceived *another* messenger . . ." There are two words which are usually rendered "another" in our versions. One means *different*, of another kind. This word means one more of the same kind. This is all the more striking, seeing that this strong messenger, descending from heaven, clothed with a cloud, rainbow-wreathed, sun-faced, and fire-limbed, seems so different from the four messengers bound at the great river Euphrates. He is *another*, for he is one with them in the judgment of earth's religions. There are really five appointed to this task, and he is one of them.

There is no call whatever to identify this messenger with Christ. Indeed, there is little gained in giving him a name. His description and actions supply all we need to understand the significance of his appearance. If any messenger more than another should be chosen for this

work it would probably be Michael. He is the great prince who stands for the sons of Israel at this time (Dan. 12:1; Un. 12:7, 9).

There is much food for meditation in the two terms *cloud* and *smoke*, or *fumes*, as used in this unveiling. Smoke, or fumes, arise from beneath from the heat of consuming flames. Clouds are drawn aloft by the warmth and attraction of the sun. One is used of judgment from beneath, the other from above. Fumes arose out of the abyss (9:2). Smoke arises from the conflagration of great Babylon (18:9). The Lord will come with clouds (1:7). He reaps the harvest of the earth seated on a cloud (14:16).

The cloud-clothed messenger is in contrast with Apollyon, amidst the fumes of the abyss, and the smoke-screened horses of the four messengers from the Euphrates. They came from beneath. He comes down from above. God delegates the destruction of the demon worshipers to terrestrial forces. He reserves the judgment of His own special people to celestial powers. When dealing out the judgment which is their due He pours out the bowls of hoarded indignation from above (15:7).

Men seek to alleviate their lot by looking for the silver lining when a gloomy cloud cuts off the sunshine. God's figure is much finer. He points us to the rainbow, which repeats His promise to remember human frailty when His judgments are in the earth. God's promises are much better than man's philosophies. The white judgment aureola which envelops the messenger is surmounted with a full-orbed nimbus of every hue. It tells us that the sun is shining and will soon appear. It is beautiful in its appearance, and precious in its promise.

The feet effect contact with the earth. Our feet should be sandaled with the readiness of the evangel of peace (Eph. 6:15). The feet of this messenger are the very antithesis of this. His feet are pillars of fire. Above he is benign and beautiful, but beneath, where he touches

the earth and the sea, he is hot with the indignation of God and burning with the fierceness of His fury. God is conciliated now toward all mankind. Then He will be at war not only with the nations, but with the apostates of His people.

The most striking feature of the vision is not the glorious messenger himself, but a tiny scroll which he holds opened in his hands. Were it not so small our first impulse would be to identify it with the seven-sealed scroll which the Lambkin had taken out of the hands of the Enthroned One (5:7). Both are scrolls. Both have been opened. But beyond this there is no resemblance. It is not the same in size. There is no mention of seven seals. Apparently the messenger himself had opened it.

In Greek *biblos* means a scroll or a collection of scrolls, as the scroll of the Psalms. The diminutive *biblion*, small scroll, does not seem to be much different in its usage. *Biblion*, little scroll, is used of Isaiah's prophecy (Luke 4:17), although the English version of Isaiah is more than thrice the length of the Apocalypse. In shorter writings, *biblos*, scroll, is used of the genealogical table from Abraham to Christ (Mat. 1:1). *Biblion*, small scroll, is used of a certificate of divorce (Mat. 19:7; Mark 10:4).

As the distinction between *biblos* and *biblion* had faded, it was necessary to use a more expressive diminutive when a very small document was intended. This was called a *biblaridion* (sometimes spelled *biblidarion* or *biblarion*). The texts are much confused, but practically all call this scroll a *biblaridion* at least once. Hence it is so uniformly in the Concordant text, and the sublinear is tiny-SCROLL. It occurs only in these four passages in the Scriptures.

But the figure of a scroll, and opened, is enough to suggest that it, like the larger, seven-sealed document, is not a book to be read, but a legal instrument to be put into execution. The first scroll was concerned with the

political deliverance of mankind. The tiny scroll, we take it, is the complement of the first, and has to do with the special deliverance of the holy people. Just as the breaking of the seven seals sends judgment to all mankind in order to deliver it from its slavery, so the opening of the tiny scroll suggests that section of this Unveiling (11:19 to 14:20) which culminates in the harvest and the vintage of the sacred nation.

The scroll is tiny, as compared with the previous one, because its scope is much more constricted. Yet it suggests sorer judgments than the larger scroll, for the seals and trumpets are replaced by the awful bellowing of the king of beasts and the terrifying reverberations of the thunder clap.

The seven thunders seem to be an anomaly in a book which purports to be an unveiling. Why should their utterances not be put on record? What connection have they with the tiny scroll? It will hardly do to be dogmatic on the details, but the setting in which they are found certainly seems to suggest a solution. The tiny scroll demands that God keep His covenants with Israel. Since these were not pure grace, they entailed judgment on those who did not keep them. Hence the thunders follow. The lightning flashes of divine judgment, as figured under the seven bowls (15-16) cannot be seen in this section, for they are connected with worship, rather than rule, but the resulting thunder is heard.

The seven bowls are poured out on apostate Israel at the same time that the sixth trumpet is terrorizing the other religions of mankind. God will judge His people, but He will not judge them with the world. In this, the throne section of the Unveiling, the souls under the altar are avenged, the one hundred forty-four thousand are sealed, the vast throng are delivered — the judgments are for the nations, not Israel. Hence the seven thunders are sealed here, but their purport is revealed in the temple section.

The thought that the seven thunders coincide with the seven bowls is confirmed by an important note of time. The seven calamities or bowls are the last, for in them God's fury is consummated (15:1). Hence the messenger swears by the living Creator that there will be no longer delay. We have come to the last era which precedes the kingdom. It will not last longer than three and a half years. God will not postpone His promise or prolong His patience, for the time has arrived. Certainty takes the place of suspense.

It is only as we look back over the long and lingering delay which has characterized God's dealings with mankind that we can realize the tremendous import of this announcement. God's Christ and His kingdom have often seemed so near, only to fade away into the future. This is God's secret. The Father has kept the time to Himself (Acts 1:7). This was the announcement which the apostles sought before the day of Pentecost. This is the proclamation which so often comes from the false prophets. But, until the middle of the last heptad, no one will know the time. Then, however, anyone who can count can calculate the days. There will be exactly twelve hundred and sixty until Christ's epiphany.

There has been apparent delay from the very first. Eve thought the Messiah had come to crush the serpent's head when Cain appeared. So she exclaimed, "I have acquired a man—Jehovah!" When Abraham came into the line of promise, he grew restive and sought to help hasten its fulfillment. Finally, Daniel was given a definite period. Seventy heptads were cut out before the kingdom could come. Sixty-nine ran their course. The Messiah came, but was cut off. When He rose, hope revived that the kingdom would speedily be restored to Israel. He refused to promise this. The whole period of the book of Acts is one of suspense. At the close, another delay is announced. The eras of the nations must intervene. When, O when, will the kingdom come? A thou-

sand years drag their weary length along. Another thousand is crawling to completion. And still there is delay. The time is God's secret. Not until the strong messenger lifts his hand to high heaven and swears that there will be no longer delay shall mankind be released from the heart sickness that comes from hope deferred. When the seventh trumpet sounds then the promises of the prophets will be present.

The eating of the tiny scroll (10: 8-11) and its effects are in fullest accord with the proposed interpretation. What could be sweeter to John's palate than a foretaste of the kingdom coupled with the announcement of its imminence? Yet at this juncture it involved all the bitterness of the time of Jacob's trouble. It could come only through the travail of Israel (12:2), and her persecution by the dragon (12:13), and the still sorer straits of those who will not worship the wild beast.

Even we enjoy the sweetness of His imminence. We do not *know*, but we *feel* that He cannot delay much longer. We see the stage being set for the next act in earth's tragedy. The nations are aligning themselves for the end time. Israel is returning to the land. There is the confusion of shifting scenes. And we know that the next act cannot commence until we wing our way hence. How happy is the hope of His return! How glorious the going forth to meet Him in the air! How precious is the prospect of abiding in His presence! Then we shall be with Him and like Him and for Him! The very thought is sweeter than honey to our hearts.

And, blessed be His name, there is no bitterness to precede its realization! Such is the glory of His grace for the members of His body that even their participation in the apostasy cannot cancel His appointment to meet them in the air, nor can drowsiness and indifference hinder the fulfillment of His tryst with them there. Israel will suffer sorely on the eve of His advent. The most terrible of all persecutions and pogroms will pre-

cede His appearing to the earth. But we have no such worries. We wait, in joyful anticipation, not for signs and sorrows, but for Himself.

The seven thunders, then, are links which associate this woe with the similar judgments of the bowls. Not only are the false religions destroyed, but the true is judged and prepared for its place in the kingdom that is about to come.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 11:1-2

11 And a reed like a rod was given me, saying: "Rouse and measure the temple of God and the altar and those worshiping in it. ²And the court outside of the temple cast outside—and you should not be measuring it, seeing that it was given to the nations, and they will be treading the holy city forty-two months.

THE TEMPLE TRANSFERRED

THE political deliverance of the earth and the supremacy of the priest nation must be based on the sacrifice of Christ and the worship of God. During the present eon there has been many a struggle between church and state for supreme power. We try to convince ourselves that the ideal government keeps them distinct. While this is expedient now, many of the failures of government are due directly to a lack of the religious element. Even men of the world have begun to see that government cannot make men moral. It is powerless to reach their consciences. Some actually say that laws should encourage religion. If the devitalized "religion" of to-day is a better deterrent of crime than the civil power, how great will be the divine religion of the day of the Lord!

These reflections are suggested by the measuring of the temple and altar and the worshipers (11:1), which is John's next prophetic action. This section of the Unveiling is primarily concerned with rule, not with religion. Yet the kingdom does not commence by the seizure of a throne for its King, or a capital for His court, or an army for its defense, but by the forcible occupancy of the temple area and the altar, and the drafting of worshipers for its maintenance. No man is fit to rule his fellows who is not fit to represent them before God. That is why Christ is not only a king, like David, but also a priest, like Aaron. His is a Melchisedec combination, a sacerdotal sovereignty. Let us learn this lesson

well. The political leadership of Israel is firmly founded on their priestly supremacy.

The first territory to enter the sphere of the kingdom is the temple. The first piece of furniture to be claimed by it is the altar. Its first subjects are characterized as worshipers. Of course the kingdom has not commenced then. Christ has not come. There is no rule over the nations. There is no priestly intercession for them. But Satan's sphere has been invaded. A base of operations has been seized. It is held against all the attacks of the enemy until the kingdom arrives. Behold the astounding picture which it presents! Practically all earthly power, controlling all territory except a few square rods in Jerusalem, ruling all people but a handful of pious Jews, commanding such armies as earth has never yet known — all of this is unable to dislodge God's pioneers from the temple precincts, or retake the territory covered by the sanctuary. God's weakness is stronger than man's utmost might.

John was given a special kind of standard for his survey. The length of his measure is not given. The dimensions of the temple are not known. They are not in point and they are purposely omitted. The significance of the action lies in the survey itself and in the character of the standard used. The act of measuring tells its own tale. More than once have I measured land, and it has usually been in the course of its transfer. I either sold it or bought it. But the measuring was the most important when only a part of a parcel of land was to be deeded to another. Then the fixing of the exact boundaries was essential. So will it be in the end time. God, of course, claims all who worship Him and rejects all who worship the beast. But now He claims a *place* on earth for His worship, unpolluted by the prevailing apostasy. He maintains an altar dedicated to His service, and a people devoted to His worship.

As no dimensions are given, the measuring has naught

to do with the size of the temple as, indeed, would be most incongruous in connection with the worshipers. The true significance of the act comes out in the negative direction not to measure the outside court, because it is given to the nations. The temple and the altar and the worshipers are given to God. They become His public property.

The reed was "like a rod" or a mace. This is the word used of the iron rod with which Christ will rule all nations. It was usually a stout club, studded with spikes, which the shepherd had hanging from his wrist by a thong, and with which he defended the sheep from their enemies. In this scene the great Shepherd does not appear, but we see the sheep, and we see the club, and and we see the enemies of the sheep menacing the fold, but they are unable to cross the line laid down by the rod. There can be no dispute as to the title of the area measured by the rod. It not only belongs to God in creation and redemption, neither of which are recognized by the powers of darkness of those days, but will be upheld by force—and that is a guaranty which even they will understand and acknowledge.

That such is the significance of the symbolic action is settled by the succeeding statement. John was not allowed to measure what was not sacred to the service of God. The outer court was omitted because it was left to be trodden by the nations until the advent of Christ. This accords with our Lord's statement that Jerusalem shall be trodden by the nations until the eras of the nations may be fulfilled (Luke 21:24). These are to end only when the Son of Mankind comes with much power and glory. The very fact that the term "gentiles", or nations, is used here is illuminating. One nation only is recognized as the people of God. All others are outside the pale. The great truth of the present no longer applies. The "middle wall of partition", the central wall of the barrier, is again set up and

is maintained by all the force that is symbolized by the iron club.

This era is measured by *days* and *months*, and *seasons*. The two witnesses testify "a thousand, two hundred sixty days" (11:3). The faithful woman is nurtured in the wilderness for a like period (12:6). The wild beast is given authority to do its will for forty-two months (13:5). As we have seen, the nations are to tread the holy city for the same lunar period (11:2). Again, the persecuted woman is nurtured "a season and seasons and half a season" (12:14). Why should the same duration be measured in such a variety of ways?

The final period of gentile domination will last for forty-two months. It might be supposed that this notable era is measured by such a variety of standards to preclude the possibility of "spiritualizing" or otherwise distorting or stretching it. But even such precautions are no safeguard with those who are determined that God never means what He says, or says what He means. This period is by far the most important in the whole realm of prophecy. It is probably the length of our Lord's ministry. But in the consummation of this eon, there is a special era called the *conclusion*, in which is the harvest (Mt. 13) and all those marvelous signs that accompany its close. From all this it is evident that it *must* be a brief period. It cannot be twelve hundred and sixty *years*. Such terrific judgments as it embraces could not be endured for such a period by the human race.

Once we see the delightful concord between the various standards and the aspect of this era to which they refer, we cannot compel ourselves to reduce months into days and distort days into years. When the tenure of the powers of darkness is to be measured, what standard is there but the moon? The sun does not shine at night. The wild beast reigns in darkness and his dominion is measured by the moon. His authority is limited to forty-two *months* (13:5), precisely the same

period, both in character and length, as the treading of the holy city by the nations. This is proof positive that the eras of the nations (commonly called "the times of the gentiles") have not ended. The capture of Jerusalem by the British did not put an end to gentile supremacy. The Jews are there on sufferance. The culminating era of gentile rule cannot commence until the wild beast comes upon the scene, and the temple of that day is no longer profaned by aliens.

The saints will not be in darkness. They are sons of light. Hence the sojourn of the two witnesses and the nurturing of the sun-clothed woman in the wilderness is measured by *days*. The actual duration is forty-two months, but it is counted by the daily, unchanging advent of the sun. This is especially apt in connection with the two witnesses, for they are luminaries themselves, God's warning flares during the final inflictions of His indignation.

The "season, seasons and half a season" is also three and a half years, but measured with regard to the harvests which are replaced by God's provision, when he nurtures the woman in the wilderness.

As the next section of this unveiling is especially concerned with the temple and its worshipers we must turn to it to identify the ones who are here referred to. Indeed this whole scene borders so closely on the next section that it introduces the wild beast (11:7) somewhat prematurely, for it is not formally presented to us until we reach the thirteenth chapter. In the fourteenth chapter we have the clue to the worshipers who are measured by John. There the Lambkin stands on mount Zion with a hundred forty-four thousand. We have already seen that these are sealed (7:2-8). A part of their protection seems to be this sanctuary on mount Zion into which the wild beast cannot come. So that the hundred forty-four thousand are here "measured" and set aside for God.

Some confusion seems to be introduced by the term "mount Zion". Solomon's temple and Herod's shrine were on mount Moriah, just north of mount Zion. It is true that the term Zion is often used in a general way for Jerusalem, of which it was a part. As it was the stronghold of David and the most easily fortified quarter of the city, it suggests strength and safety, the very thoughts which are foremost in the measuring of the temple. Moreover, the tabernacle was set up on mount Zion in David's day and the sanctuary was not removed to mount Moriah until Solomon finished his temple (1 Ki. 8:1; 2 Chr. 5:2). Solomon and the temple are types of the kingdom. But even then the temple will not be on Moriah, but in the holy oblation. The days of David typify the days preceding the kingdom. Hence it is far more fitting to find the temple on Zion than on Moriah. Perhaps this will be the solution of the grave problem presented by the mosque of Omar and the fierce prejudice of the Mohammedan world.

There is much in this notable scene which should strike us strongly by way of contrast. It has all the elements which are absent from the present grace. There is the club, the temple, the "middle wall of partition", none of which can possibly have any place today. The club speaks of rule by force. We submit to rulers. We proclaim peace and dispense with all displays of force. The temple is the seat of ritual. The altar is the place of sacrifice. Nothing of this nature can claim a right to our support in this day of spiritual realities. Now the distinction between Israel and the nations vanishes. All have access unhindered into the presence of God. Any line of demarkation such as is suggested here is a radical reversal of the truth which prevails in this economy.

The bearing of this is so important on the interpretation of the whole Unveiling that it will be profitable to linger here awhile. The majority of expositors have many and diverse explanations of this scroll, based on

the principle that it consists of a cover, which they must remove. In effect, they deny that it is an *unveiling* and insist that their exposition is the real unveiling. All is wrenched out of the day of the Lord and imposed upon the day of man. Everything possible (and impossible) is made to mean "the church", by which the present administration of God is usually designated. In this place we are asked to believe that the temple means the church, the altar Christ, the porch without, heretics. One of the leading lights sums up the efforts to explain the time periods here spoken of by saying "no solution at all approaching to a satisfactory one has ever yet been given of any one of these periods." We might add that no *solution* ever will be satisfactory, because none is necessary.

We thank God for those few expositors who have repudiated the false principle of applying all to the present and of distorting everything by force to fit their misconceptions. May God give us faith to believe that the temple is the temple, the altar the altar, and that a day, a month, or a season are those divisions of time which are so designated in the dictionary. Then all the "undeniable difficulties" vanish. The fantastic mirage of human speculation fades away and the sober and solid and satisfying substance of fact remains. The most spiritual interpretation is that which refuses to "spiritualize".

One whose spirit has been acclimated in the unclouded sunshine of God's grace cannot feel comfortable in the murky atmosphere and stormy scenes of the Unveiling. All is alien and forbidding. And not only is the general impression foreign to our spirits, but every detail, once we observe closely, is in contrast with that to which we are accustomed. The measuring of the temple and its worshipers may serve as a sample. The very thought of measuring any portion of earth's surface is entirely outside the prospect of the believer today. He

has no allotment on earth. His place is among the celestials. If we keep this thought within its proper sphere, as introductory to the establishment of Messiah's kingdom on earth, it is luminous. Apply it to ourselves, and it becomes darkness. Our allotment is not on earth, and we have no immediate interest in this action, even if it does restore to God the most sacred spot the earth has ever known.

Were we commissioned to capture Zion's mount for God, we could never use a club. All physical force is foreign to the spirit which characterizes the present administration. God's weakness is our armory, even as His folly is our wisdom. The present grace is an era of such imperative peace on God's part that we may say with all reverence that He cannot use a club. Paul in his Roman prison, accredited ambassador from the high court of heaven, exhibits not only the extreme of human antagonism to God, but also portrays the divine insistence on peace in spite of the utmost provocation. God's present attitude is conciliation and He refuses to recognize the most offensive of human acts. Then His attitude will be the very reverse. It will be the day of His indignation. He still desires peace, but He fights for it. He grasps the shepherd's club and cudgels mankind into submission.

To the spiritual eye the blackened debris which covered the temple site after its destruction by Titus is far more beautiful than even Solomon's magnificent shrine. The loveliness of form, of gleaming stones, of glittering gold, and the pomp and pageantry of ritual, all conspired to conceal the God within. It proclaimed Him distant, inaccessible. Such approach as was possible was laborious and led only to the vestibule of the abode of the Shekinah. The nations were denied access even to the outer courts proper. But when the temple was demolished the most abject of the human race could stand on the very spot sacred to the Deity alone, into

which even the chief priest dared not enter except for the annual propitiation. In the scene before us there is a return to former times. Another temple is built. Its precincts are sacred. Its ritual is exclusive.

Though we, sinners of the nations, have access now into the very presence of God, all is in spirit, not in flesh. We could not enter into the temple that is to be in that day. The nearest we could come is the outside court, which is given to the nations. Now all such distinctions are abolished. Jew and Greek, Israel and the nations, Circumcision and Uncircumcision are all one in the new humanity which is in Christ Jesus. Then these distinctions will be reestablished and enforced as never before.

Such is the setting for the section concerning the two witnesses, which will next take our attention. A rather amusing incident comes to my mind whenever these are mentioned. Some time ago, in a gathering of saints, there had been some discussion of various religious leaders who had pandered to popularity by professing to be some biblical character, or at least assuming some sacred name. This, it was argued, gave them immense prestige with the people. As there were two of us witnessing for present truth, one brother proposed in jest that we pose as the two witnesses of Revelation! As we hardly cared to be sentenced to death in three and a half years, we declined, with thanks. Yet it brought vividly to our minds the unbridgable chasm between their testimony and ours, and a feeling of profound thankfulness that we had been entrusted with a testimony so delightfully superior in character and scope and Godlikeness.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 11:3-14

³And I will be endowing My two witnesses and they will be prophesying a thousand, two hundred sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. ⁴These are the two olive trees, and the two lampstands which stand in sight of the Lord of the earth. ⁵And if anyone is wanting to injure them, fire is issuing out of their mouth and is devouring their enemies. And if anyone should be wanting to injure them, thus must he be killed. ⁶These have authority to lock heaven, that there may be no showers of rain for the days of their prophecy. And they have authority over the waters to be turning them into blood, and to smite the earth with every calamity whenever they will. ⁷And whenever they should be finishing their testimony, the wild beast which is ascending out of the abyss will be doing battle with them and it will be conquering them and killing them. ⁸And their corpse will be at the square of the great city, which, spiritually, is being called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord also was crucified. ⁹And those out of the peoples and tribes and languages and nations are observing their corpse three days and a half, and they are not letting their corpses be placed in a tomb. ¹⁰And those dwelling on the earth are rejoicing over them and are making merry, and will be sending oblations to one another, seeing that these two prophets torment those dwelling on the earth. ¹¹And after the three days and a half the spirit of life out of God entered into them and they stand on their feet. And great fear falls on those beholding them. ¹²And they hear a loud voice out of heaven saying to them: "*Ascend here!*" And they ascended into heaven in a cloud, and their enemies behold them. ¹³And in that hour occurred a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city falls, and there were seven thousand names of the men killed in the earthquake. And the rest became affrighted, and give glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴The second woe passed away. *Lo!* the third woe is coming swiftly!

THE TWO WITNESSES

GOD has never left Himself without witnesses among mankind. When revelation is silent and men are mute, nature bears a constant testimony to His imperceptible power and divinity. In these days of scientific investigation the voice of nature is very insistent. Every avenue of knowledge leads up to marvels before which the devout scientist bows his head. He acknowledges, like the wise men of Egypt, "This is the finger of God!" We talk of weight, or gravitation, but no one can explain how matter influences matter without any connecting link. We talk of light, but who knows how it travels? We dissect living tissue, but whence is the vital force? We consider the soul, but cannot even connect it with tangible forms. And the spirit, with all its Godlike powers, is utterly beyond the range of the faint flicker of scientific thought. Everywhere we look we find that intangible, inscrutable force which testifies to the presence of God's spirit. There is no explanation of creation but God. Neither is there any reasonable cause for the slightest motion in the universe today but God. The tiniest raindrop and the mightiest orb of space unite in the grand chorus which celebrates His presence and power. Only the blind cannot see God in the works of His hands.

As in nature, so in revelation. The vital power of the Word of God has never been lacking among the sons of Adam. However much it may be opposed, His written revelation works wonders in the midst of men and testifies to the living, loving God. But when the testimony of His Word and His world are rejected, then He makes

Himself known by other means. When nature is hushed and revelation silenced, He sends witnesses which must be heard. Such is the situation on earth today. Though science never before was so nearly face to face with the God of nature, its devotees shut Him out of their hearts and lives. Though the Scriptures have never been more widely circulated, never before have they been so strenuously opposed. We are in the apostasy, the time of man's mightiest fight to force God outside the realm of his perceptions.

The seer Zechariah brings before us a prophetic situation which is very similar to that in which Israel is found at the time of the end. They had returned from Babylon and, as it will be in the future, their first concern was the rebuilding of the temple. The nations were strongly opposed to its restoration. So Jehovah raised up two witnesses, Zerubbabel and Joshua, and the prophet in his vision saw a lampstand fed by two olive trees (Zech. 3, 4). Here was the power He proposed to use in completing the temple. When Zechariah asked what the lampstand and olive trees signified, he was told, "This is the word of Jehovah to Zerubbabel, saying: 'Not by valor nor by vigor, for it should be by My spirit,' saith Jehovah of hosts'" (Zech. 4: 6, C.V.). This is the key to the testimony of the two witnesses.

God does not come into conflict with His creatures merely to manifest His power and their impotence. That would not be a proper preparation for their ultimate reconciliation. God could wipe all evil from the earth in an instant. The reason He does not do so is that He needs it in reaching the hearts of men. He could destroy the wild beast of the end time at the very beginning of his career. The White Horse Rider could lead forth His army in the middle of the heptad and clear the earth of its usurpers. Instead of this He gives two witnesses who rehearse, in that brief period, the whole of God's testimony regarding the kingdom.

Whether they really are Moses and Elijah we are not told. But they give the world the same miraculous evidences of God's presence and power as Moses did before Pharaoh. They can turn waters into blood (Ex. 7:14-21) and smite the earth with every kind of calamity whensoever they will (Un. 11:6). This suggests that the greater exodus of Israel is still future. Egyptian bondage is as nothing compared with the slavery demanded by the great tyrant of that day. Their political deliverance and rebirth as a nation will follow the same portents as those which accompanied their exodus from Egypt. The same God Who gained His great name by breaking Pharaoh's power of old, is manifestly present in the persons of the two witnesses.

Elijah called down fire upon his foes (2 Ki. 1:9-12) even as the two witnesses will have power to project fire from their mouths to devour their enemies (Un. 11:5). Besides this they lock heaven for three years and a half just as Elijah did in Israel (1 Ki. 17:1). The similarity is so striking that there can be no doubt that the witnesses have the spirit and power of Elijah, the greatest of all the ancient prophets.

Thus the character of the double witness is evident from their acts and from the two great men whom they recall. The man of sin will demand fealty; the anti-christ will insist on worship. He will be their emperor and their god. He will be both the Pharaoh and the Baal of that day. Israel must serve and worship him or suffer at his hands. The two witnesses, in the spirit and power of Moses and Elijah, withstand his rule and his religion. In that time of stress they will enforce, in their narrow sphere, the power of that priest kingdom which Israel will administer when Messiah comes. Judgment from earth and from heaven sustains the testimony to the true God and the right Ruler in the very climax of man's rebellion.

It will be a most memorable spectacle when the

great monarch of all earthly dominion and the undisputed object of nearly all mundane worship is confronted by two men, clothed in sackcloth, without apparent power or influence, calmly defying his authority and dealing out death to all who seek to injure them. They testify boldly to the true God and His Christ and rouse the ire of the wild beast, which has been slain, and whose death stroke was cured (13:3). After it ascends out of the abyss it attacks them and kills them. But this cannot be until their testimony is finished. It lasts exactly twelve hundred and sixty days—three years and a half—and probably nearly corresponds with the last half of the seventieth heptad of Daniel's seventy "weeks".

There is much fine food for reflection in this fact. If the most powerful man earth will ever see cannot shorten the testimony of the two witnesses a single day or hour or moment, surely God will see that our time is fulfilled. Men seek to "insure" their lives, but the whole procedure is based on the fact that their *death* is assured. God's witnesses may be called on to face many hazards, endangering their health and happiness and threatening their very lives, yet nothing but the divine decree can close the testimony of God's slave. Each of His saints has his era. We should face the future calmly and confidently. It is not in the hands of our friends. It is not in the hands of our enemies. It is in His hands Who overrules where He does not rule, Who cuts every career to conform to the great purpose of the eons.

The figure of the olive tree is a familiar one to the student of Scripture. It is a symbol of divine illumination. All the light in the tabernacle and temple came from olive oil. Israel, as God's witness on earth, is figured by an olive tree. This is true of them nationally, quite apart from their apostasy. The root of all revelation must always be Jewish, for the inspired penmen were of that nation. This very Unveiling comes through a Jew. If, for a time, the gentiles are used to dispense

the light it contains, that simply gives them a temporary place in the olive tree, until the holy nation is restored to its proper place as God's witness in the earth.

Let us not be disturbed by the fact that the gentiles will be broken out of the olive tree. It is not a question of salvation, but of witness bearing. It is not concerned with individuals, but nations. *On the earth* the nations, as such, have taken Israel's place temporarily, as witnesses for Him. As a whole they will prove unfaithful to their trust and Israel will be restored to its natural place. Between these two witnessings, when the nations are apostate (the faithful individuals having been removed to their celestial allotment), and before Israel is restored, we have the testimony of the two witnesses. They are especially provided to fill a gap in God's testimony to the world.

Jerusalem is fast becoming a "great" city today. It will probably continue to grow in size and importance until, at the time of the end, it will actually become a teeming metropolis. There it is that the two witnesses testify and there they meet their death. A lurid light is thrown upon its development by the names which are applied to it in this connection. Spiritually its condition is like that of Sodom and Egypt (11:8). The pleasure and wisdom of the world will find full sway in the city once devoted to the display of divine wisdom and holy joy. Only a short time ago a university was founded on Mount Scopus which seeks to be the center of human learning and culture. The wisdom that knows not God will change the city into an Egyptian seat of learning, whose savants will withstand Moses as the wise men did of old. But, with human wisdom, goes human depravity. The Jews, who have been the chief promoters of pleasure and vice among the nations, will make Jerusalem a hot-bed of iniquity. Sodom's lowest vices will flourish in the place once dedicated to the most Holy One of Israel. A sojourn of several months in the city, and personal con-

tact with a professor of the university, has revealed the strong tendency in these two directions in Jerusalem today, notwithstanding the many influences which should hold them in check.

That the city here referred to is really Jerusalem is evident from the phrase "where their Lord, also, was crucified". To the contention that He was crucified outside the city we only need to suggest that the site of Golgotha is already within the limits of the new and greater city. But it is not really necessary to prove that this is Jerusalem for no one can prove that it is any other place. It is *not* Sodom or Egypt, but has their spiritual characteristics. It is important to see that God's witnesses are killed in the capital of the coming kingdom, and the act is coupled with that greater tragedy so much like it, the crucifixion of their Lord.

In the East it is the height of indignity to expose the bodies of slain enemies to public gaze. The corpses of God's witnesses are taken to the public square and lie unburied. No one is allowed to entomb them. They are the scorn and butt of the world's wit. With all their power to inflict harm, the wild beast was more than a match for them! Now God's name will be completely blotted out of the earth! Possibly there will be a world holiday and festival to celebrate their death. This is the last of the world's good times that we read of in Holy Writ. What gory glee is theirs who gloat over the murders that seem to silence the last whisper of divine interference in human affairs!

Early expositors, who did not "spiritualize" everything in this Unveiling, might well stagger at the difficulty presented in the statement that those dwelling on the earth are rejoicing over them, when it all seems to occur within a few days' time. It certainly gives the impression that, in less than three days, the whole world knows of their death and celebrates it. Until lately, this was quite impossible. Now it is easily accomplished.

Within the last few hours, in the room in which this is written, twenty-nine messages were received from the Philippines, from a station nearly nine thousand miles away. These messages could have been heard anywhere on earth under proper conditions.

This station, 6BJX, at the instance of one of the powerful broadcasting stations, has been helping to arrange for the simultaneous production of one program in practically every region on earth, so that anyone, anywhere, will be able to listen to the voices of certain world celebrities. The sound will be carried to the remotest regions in a small fraction of a second. Few of the world's recent inventions are so full of possibilities in connection with the great dominion of the end time. The great monarch of that day should be able to communicate directly, by word of mouth, with all nations, all peoples, every individual on earth, and at a moment's notice.

Give us a few years more, and he will be *seen* as well as heard. *Television* is a practical possibility, which merely needs to be developed. Even the two witnesses themselves, silent in death, may be shown upon a screen in every corner of the habitable earth. In fact, it is not at all impossible that an astonished world will gaze upon them as they are roused from death. Perhaps the very voice of God will be heard in every hamlet, calling them back to life. And then they ascend, the cynosure of every eye on earth! What a "program" that will be! A few nights ago some of my friends listened to the king of England, nearly nine thousand miles away. This morning many of my neighbors heard a long address from the same place. But it was hardly deemed worthy of mention!

There is no reason why, within half an hour of their death, every person of prominence on earth should not know of it and set about celebrating the event. Newspapers are slow compared with this new plan of dissem-

inating news. This was illustrated in a striking manner not long ago. While we listened to the Philippines, the usual dots and dashes suddenly changed to a confused crashing. A few seconds later word was sent that it had been caused by the explosion of an ammunition dump. This was heard nearly nine thousand miles away before it reached the ears of those within a mile of the scene. It did not appear in the newspapers till two days later.

But a still greater marvel appears in the passage we are pondering. How could the writer of the Unveiling know about radios? Did not John know that this passage would appear ridiculously impossible? To me this passage proves that the Writer was a great Scientist. It was inspired by One Who not only fathoms the future but Who knows the capacities of His own creation. Scripture is not "up-to-date" scientifically, but ahead of the times.

Now comes the closing climax in the testimony of the two witnesses. We are inclined to suppose that their testimony was cut short by death. But, in a very real sense, death itself was a part of their final testimony. At first it seemed to mark their whole career as false and fruitless. But when their death was utterly beyond denial, for their bodies were subjected to public gaze and they had been dead more than three days, then God gives the supreme proof of His presence and power by raising them and calling them in audible tones to ascend into the clouds of heaven.

Life comes from God alone. All man's efforts to analyze it have failed. All his endeavors to produce it are futile. The crowning proof that Christ was the Son of God was His power to raise the dead. The prestige of the wild beast is based on his supposed resurrection. His death stroke was cured. He is a startling imitation of the risen Christ. His fame is greatly enhanced by his success in killing the two witnesses. All this is undone in an instant, when the spirit of God vivifies their corpses, and they stand up in view of all. The effect is

immeasurably heightened by the voice out of heaven, followed by their ascension.

Great consternation seizes their enemies. It may be that they receive some hint of the awfulness of their position. The very earth seems to shudder at the moral abyss which yawns before the enemies of Jehovah. The earthquake takes a toll of seven thousand. At last God's marvels begin to affect their hard hearts. The rest become frightened and give glory to the God of heaven.

Thus ends the second woe. It covers the period of the sixth trumpet. It comprises the scourge of the two hundred millions of terrible cavalry, the seven thunders, the seizure of the temple area, and the testimony of the two witnesses. Nothing comparable with these calamities, in scope or intensity, has ever visited the earth. These are the last arguments in God's great controversy with mankind. His last two witnesses not only testify for God, but testify of man that he is a hater of God and thirsts for the blood of all who stand for Him. From the blood of His first witness, righteous Abel, through that of the Faithful Witness Himself, to this final testimony, man manifests himself a murderer in the first degree.

How thankful we should be that the evangel committed to us is in utmost contrast to the testimony of the two witnesses! They call down physical judgments. We invoke spiritual blessings. They spread havoc and death. We dispense grace and life. They faithfully represent an indignant God, in the fury of His wrath. We are ambassadors of peace, heralding the amazing marvel of a suppliant God, Who refuses to be offended, Who is conciliated to all mankind, and Who prays all to be conciliated to Him. The still small voice of a praying God is a far greater marvel than the thunders of His wrath.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 11:15-18

¹⁵And the seventh messenger trumpets. And loud voices occurred in heaven, saying: "*The world kingdom became our Lord's and His Christ's, and He shall be reigning for the eons of the eons! Amen!*"

¹⁶And the twenty-four elders who are sitting on their thrones in God's sight fall on their faces and worship God, ¹⁷saying, "We are thanking Thee, Lord God Almighty, Who art and Who wast, seeing that Thou hast taken Thy great power and dost reign. ¹⁸And the nations are angered, and Thy indignation came, and the era for the dead to be judged, and to give wages to Thy slaves the prophets, and to the saints and to those who are fearing Thy name, the small and the great, and to blight those who are blighting the earth."

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET is also the third woe (11:14). It ushers in the kingdom. It is not only the culmination of God's indignation against the nations, but includes the era of Israel's resurrection and reward, and the judgment of her apostates, who are blighting the earth. It is described in general terms rather than specific occurrences, for it seems to include within its scope the closing judgments of the succeeding section, which gives us the religious redemption of the earth. The very brief outline of this trumpet (11:14-18) will disappoint us unless we magnify each statement to its proper proportions and fill in the suggestive hints which abound.

The seventh trumpet marks the greatest crisis in human history. It is the turning point of the eons. Three evil eons come to their culmination, two blessed eons commence their course, when the seventh messenger blows his final blast. Man's day meets its full end; Jehovah's day comes into full swing. No wonder heaven is jubilant. Earth's sovereignty passes from man, the dupe of Satan, to the Son of Man, the Christ of God. Evil and sin and all its attendant train of sorrow and woe have had their day and are now restrained. The golden age, the hope of all humanity since Adam's sin, is heralded by the seventh trumpet's sound. The world kingdom becomes our Lord's and His Christ's, and He shall be reigning for the eons of the eons! *Amen!*

This is *not* "the millennium". The saints have become so loose in their manner of speaking of these great themes that we have lost the significance and

power of these great unfoldings. Almost every reference to the period of time which includes the thousand years is called "the millennium", just as nearly every mention of the great kaiser of the end time terms him the "anti-christ". God has various names for him, each of which should be used as occasion demands. And the Lord speaks of the coming eon and its time periods in a variety of ways. Prophetically, it is the day of Jehovah, the Lord's day (1:10). Religiously, the saints of the Circumcision live and reign with Christ the thousand years, or the millennium. This refers to Israel as the priest nation. As such their reign is limited to that part of the day of the Lord which follows their resurrection and precedes the loosing of Satan. The *reign* of the saints is not limited to the millennium, but their reign *as priests* is thus confined.

There is no mention of the millennium in the prophetic or political sections of the Apocalypse. Only in the religious section, where Israel's sacerdotal ascendancy is the theme, does this period occur. It speaks of the time when Israel will not only reign over the nations for Jehovah, but bring the nations near to Jehovah. After the thousand years the nations revolt. In the new earth they need no priests to bring them near, for God Himself tabernacles with them (21:3), and the temple with its ritual is no longer present (21:22). But the kingdom is by no means limited to the millennium. It is for the eons of the eons. It commences before the millennium and lasts long after it has passed into history. The thousand years are only an episode in the kingdom's early career.

The same reflections apply to the eonian kingdom. It does not last forever. It is limited to the eons. In its religious phase it ceases with the thousand years. In its political phase it closes with the conclusion of the eons. Only its paternal post-eonian phase is eternal. Priests will not stand between mankind and God forever. Rulers

shall not govern their fellow men for God endlessly. Christ, the great Melchisedec Priest, remains such until priesthood is done with "to a finality" (Heb. 7:3). He reigns as priest only "for the eon" (Heb. 7:17). Yet He shall reign "for the eons of the eons" (Un. 11:15). The kingdom itself, after He gives it up to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24), has no consummation (Luke 1:33). It only is eternal.

The point we wish to impress on our readers at this crisis is that the fearful judgments which we have been considering are not only introductory to the millennial reign, but to the much longer and more lasting dominion of the saints during both of the last eons. Never again will Satan and mankind grasp the reins of government. The single attempt *after* the close of the millennium (not *at* its close), will be summarily suppressed. These judgments are final. They place the scepter in the hands of Christ, not, indeed, forever, but until He hands it over to His Father. So long as rule lasts, so long as it is necessary for man to restrain his fellows, dominion will remain in the hands of Christ, Who will associate the saints of the Circumcision with Himself in the government of Israel and the nations on the earth.

The coming of Christ is the commencement of the kingdom. And yet there is no direct intimation, under the seventh trumpet, that He has come. Had we been writing this part of the Apocalypse, we would certainly have brought Him to earth in all His majesty at this juncture, either by vision or direct assertion. His coming is implied by His reign and by His awards to His servants. There is one special implication which is of extraordinary interest. The twenty-four elders address God thus: "Who art and Who wast" (11:17). If we compare this with His full title, "Who is and Who was, *and Who is coming*" (1:8), we are struck with the fact that the last clause is omitted. *He is no longer the Coming One!* False reverence has made much of the title

Jehovah, of which this is but an amplification. The latest scholarship actually proposes to translate the title as "the Eternal". Here we are given the key to its true significance.

Jehovah is the title of Deity which relates Him to time, or rather, to the eonian times. He is not the "Eternal", but the eonian God (Rom. 16:26). It was not His name before the eons, nor will it be applied to Him when they are past. It is transient. Its future tense retires when the kingdom comes. He cannot be spoken of as One Who is coming after He has come, at least not in any deliberate amplification of the tetragrammaton. When God becomes fully known by all His creatures, when He becomes their All, the rest of this title will survive only as a memory. It, together with His other august appellations, will be submerged in the affectionate term of family relationship. He will be the universal Father. The change from Creator to Father is the goal of the eons.

Another indication that Christ has come is found in the statement that the era has come for "the judgment of the dead". Few, indeed, but will take this as the *punishment* of the dead. Unfortunately the English word *judgment* has, by its contact with human affairs, taken on a vindictive tinge. We ought to have a new word which is neutral. The "judgment of the dead" here referred to is explained as giving the wages due to His slaves the prophets, and to the saints, and to those fearing His name (11:18). Now it is evident that the prophets and saints and fearers of His name must be raised from the dead before they can receive their wages, and this does not occur until at least seventy-five days after His coming, according to Daniel's prophecy.

There is a decided and delightful contrast between the seventh trumpet of the Unveiling and the "last trump" which will call us to be with the Lord. Some have attempted to identify them on the ground that

each is a last trumpet. But things having the same name are not by any means necessarily identical. Christ and Satan are each called a lion, but who would make that a mark of identity? Some have been misled into teaching that the white horse rider of the first seal is the true Messiah, instead of the false, because he is like the One Who is called "The Word of God" (19:13). The fact that the seventh trumpet is the last of this series should lead us to contrast it with the last trump for which we listen.

The word "last", like the word "first", is not an absolute, but a relative term. The seventh is not even called a "last" trumpet, though, of course, it is the last of this series. Every time a trumpet is blown there is a "last trump", a final blast. There is sufficient similarity between the blast which brings in the kingdom and the trump of God which transfigures us to afford a striking contrast, but not the least basis for identification. Indeed, they are so dissimilar in detail that it is surprising that anyone should even consider the possibility that they could refer to the same event. We cannot do better than to meditate on the differences between them and to note the gracious advantages which are ours in Christ Jesus.

The seven trumpets are blown by seven messengers. Who the seventh messenger is we do not know, nor is it of any moment. We, however, are looking for no one but our Lord. We read "*He* will be trumpeting" (1 Cor. 15:52). Again "the Lord *Himself* will be descending from heaven with the shout of command, with the voice of the chief Messenger, and with the trumpet of God" (1 Thes. 4:16). He comes not, as the song says, "with angels attending", but alone. He is Himself the Chief Messenger, and He it is Who blows the trumpet of God. It is a pity that some versions suggest that an archangel accompanies Him. None is needed. To us He comes in the solitary sublimity and majesty which becomes the

Head of the body, His ecclesia. Were we the "Bride", He might send some messenger for us, as Abraham did for Rebecca. But we, like the Thessalonians, are waiting for God's Son out of the heavens . . . Who rescues us out of the coming indignation (1 Thes. 1:10).

There is a very precious quality in this thought. In coming to the earth to bless Israel, He will come with myriads of mighty messengers, as is befitting the entry of a Conqueror and a King. In coming for those who have a celestial allotment He does not even descend to the earth, but meets us in the air, to which He calls us to ascend. No messenger's voice would ever wake the dead. No archangel could change the living. Christ alone is competent for this, and He needs no assistance from angelic powers. There is a delightful intimacy suggested by this solitary tryst, which accords deliciously with the transcendent grace which not only saves us, but which makes us the continuous recipients of His favor. We look for Him alone, our Saviour, our Lord and our Head, and desire the presence of none other.

The contrast grows the more we inquire into it. The Unveiling was given by and through an apostle of the Circumcision, for John was one of the three most prominent of the twelve. Its message is especially for the elect nation. No one can even begin to understand this Unveiling unless this is first acknowledged. The kingdom ushered in by the seventh trumpet is the sovereignty of Israel over the other nations. We can have no part in this. In connection with it we read that "the nations are angered" (11:18). How unlike our blessed expectation!

The Corinthians and the Thessalonians, to whom Paul wrote concerning the trump of God, were of the Uncircumcision. They could not possibly connect his words with the seventh trumpet, for the Unveiling was not written until long afterward, and by an apostle who

was not sent to them. Before Paul ever went to these places he was severed (Acts 13:2) for a special service, and the leaders among the Circumcision recognized his ministry for the nations. When he came to Thessalonica he first went to the Jewish synagogue, but the Jews, with a few exceptions, would not have his message. Yet a vast multitude of the reverent Greeks believed (Acts 17:1-9). To these he wrote his first epistle. In it the small sprinkling of Jews is ignored, for only the gentiles could turn back to God from idols (1 Thes. 1:9).

It is difficult to imagine a more unlikely time and place for a revelation concerning the seventh trumpet. Paul is the last one we should expect to reveal truth intended for the Jews. The gentiles in Thessalonica are the least likely to be its recipients. The Thessalonians were sorrowing for their dead. What consolation could be found for those of the nations in connection with the seventh trumpet? Instead of linking them on to the Lord's coming to the Circumcision, he gives them the opening intimation of that grand and glorious expectation which is ours in Christ Jesus. Just as he had hinted at justification at Pisidian Antioch, and later developed it in his Roman epistle, so now he gives the nations the first glimpse of His coming for them, in accord with the redundant grace into which they are called. Like all Paul's revelations, this is developed in later epistles. It goes from glory to glory. In first Corinthians he explains more fully concerning our bodies, which will be fitted to rise to the air to meet Him when He comes. In Ephesians he refers to it as a prior expectation (Eph. 1:12). This is the distinguishing feature of those to whom that epistle is written. In Philippians it attains its greatest glory in the transfiguration of our bodies to conform them to His glorious body.

The seventh trumpet was no secret. The resurrection and reward of Israel's saints, the doom of her apostates, and the anger of the nations is all foretold in the Proph-

ets and the Psalms. But Paul, in his epistle to the Corinthians, tells them a *secret*. That is the *change* from an earthly, soulish body to a celestial, spiritual body, in the twinkle of an eye at the last trump. No such change is needed for Israel's saints. Their bodies remain terrestrial, in accord with their place and portion. Such a change is absolutely necessary for those who rise to the air to meet the Lord, as the Thessalonians, or those who receive a celestial allotment, as in Ephesians.

The seventh trumpet covers a considerable space of time. Several months, at least, are needed to include all that occurs under it. But here we have a totally different thought. The last trump is not a prolonged blast, but a short, sharp note of only an instant's duration.

Paul's epistles are a unit. All that he wrote is to and for the nations, and is concerned with the present administration of God's grace. His earlier unfoldings are preparatory for his latest revelations. His ministry to Israel is given us in the book of Acts, but it does not invade his epistles. Here we have the divine line drawn between that which pertains to us and that which relates to the Davidic kingdom. The difference between Acts and the Pauline epistles written at the same time is often very striking. Thessalonians is a good example. In Acts he goes into the synagogue and seeks to reach the Jews. The vast number of believing gentiles is a side issue. But we can read his letters to the Thessalonians through without being aware that there is a Jew in Thessalonica. It is all for the nations.

The highest and latest revelation, given in the Ephesian group of epistles, cannot be understood apart from the earlier unfoldings. Ephesians itself has only one brief reference to our Lord's return. This is altogether unintelligible unless illumined by the light of the Thessalonian and Corinthian letters. How did the Ephesians come to be in a state of prior expectancy (Eph. 1:12) unless they knew the "word of the Lord" sent

to the Thessalonians and the "secret" revealed to the Corinthians? Besides, the "mystery" or secret of Ephesians consists of a modification of truth revealed in Paul's earlier epistles. It was no secret that the nations were the body of Christ. That is found in Romans (12:5) and 1 Corinthians (12:12). The secret is that this body has now become a *joint* body (Eph. 3:6). The nations have been partakers, now they become *joint* partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus, through the evangel of which Paul had already been the dispenser (Eph. 3:6, 7).

The greatest contrast remains. "The last trump", for which our ears are attuned, is inexpressibly glorious in its *grace*. That blessed blast may find many of us drowsing, unmindful of His promise. Will we forfeit our place and privilege? Not so! For this is the climax of His grace, and all who are members of His body will be called to meet their Saviour. None of us could meet Him in these bodies of humiliation without dire dread and deep despair. We could not bear the glory of His presence in these sin-shattered carcasses. But ere we rise to greet His glory we ourselves will be transfigured. We will meet Him with bodies like His own! Weak and worn, diseased and dishonored, racked by pain, dying by degrees — such is our present lot. But then all sorrow and pain and shame will give place to joy and pleasure and glory in the presence of the Glorious One. There is no grace to compare with this on earth beneath or heaven above; nor will revolving eons e'er again see such transcendent favor.

But when the seventh trumpet sounds God is indignant and the nations are angry. Israel alone receives the rewards of faithful work. Grace there is, of a sort, but not unmixed with law. And it is all on earth, a glory terrestrial, while we enjoy unmerited glory, celestial, supernal.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 11:19

¹⁹And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened, and the ark of God's covenant was seen in His temple, and lightnings and voices and thunders and an earthquake and a great hail occurred.

THE TEMPLE SECTION

GOD now makes His home in the bodies of His believing people (1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:15). So long as the temple stood, and its ritual was recognized, this august indwelling was true only of His beloved Son. In Him the divine spirit dwelt, but not in His disciples. It came on them for power, as at Pentecost (Acts 1:8), and cleansed them by baptism (Acts 1:5), and filled them for utterance (Acts 2:4), but it did not make its permanent habitation in them. By congregating in the sanctuary, the Pentecostal disciples showed their reverence for the sacred shrine. Their action clearly indicated two great facts. They did not have the homing of the spirit (1 Cor. 3:16) or they would not have repaired to the sanctuary. They were drawn thither by the feeble vestige of the sacred Presence which made it the only house of God of which they were aware.

Temples are temporary tenements. After Jehovah had taken up His abode in the tabernacle in the wilderness He found it necessary to change His residence to Solomon's splendid house. After the Shekinah Presence left this temple tenantless it was destroyed. Zerubbabel built another in the days of the restoration. Later, Herod rebuilt the shrine. But it was not until Christ came that the divine Presence reëntered the sanctuary. Herod's temple also was destroyed, so that God had no place to dwell. Hence He now homes in the hearts of His saints. But in the conclusion of this eon, as we have seen (11:1), there will once more be a temple made with hands, the reputed dwelling place of Deity. This will be

replaced by Ezekiel's magnificent structure in the holy oblation during the millennial era. Even this will disappear in that blessed eon when no temple bars the approach to God (21:22).

Besides these earthly habitations there is the pattern of them all in the heavens. It is this which comes before us as we turn to the Temple Section of the Unveiling. We have considered the Prophetic Section, the messages to the ecclesias (1:4—3:22), in which Christ appears as the great Prophet to His earthly people. We have traversed the Throne Section (4:1—11:18), and witnessed the political deliverance of the earth, with Christ acclaimed as King over the nations. Now we are about to enter the Temple Section (11:19—20:15), which sets forth the religious deliverance of the earth. In this Christ is the great Melchisedec Priest, Who not only rules the people for God, but leads them in the worship of God.

So much light has come to me through the recognition of the religious character of this portion of the Apocalypse that I am eager to impress its importance on all who wish a clear conception of this scroll. It is very evident that the Temple Section brings before us the same era as the previous portion, for both end with the establishment of Christ's kingdom. It is also clear that many of the same characters come before us, such as the one hundred forty-four thousand (7:4; 14:1), and the wild beast (11:7; 13:1). If we are occupied with the same characters at the same time, it is clear that they must be considered from a new standpoint.

The outstanding fact that the previous section is introduced by a vision of a Throne, and this one by a Temple is sufficient for the anointed eye. A throne has to do with dominion, a temple with worship. These are the two major aspects of God's dealings with mankind. Too often are we impressed with the fact that the millennium is the time of good government. It is far more

than that. It is the era of world-wide worship of Jehovah. The earth must not only be purged of political offenders, but it must be rid of false religions and philosophies of every kind and creed.

The manward and the Godward aspects of truth are ever distinguished in the Scriptures. Not only were there priests and kings in Israel, but the nation's history was recorded from the divine as well as the human standpoint. Chronicles is not a mere repetition of Kings, though of necessity it must be much like it, seeing that it covers the same events.

It will help us to appreciate the religious character of this section of the Unveiling if we take a hasty glance through it and note how this is emphasized at every turn. The first sign gives us Israel under the figure of a woman. Later we will find the apostate nation under the same metaphor. Now this pictures their relation to Jehovah. The faithful woman has a celestial array. She is Israel in covenant with Jehovah.

The next sign is similar. The dragon is not an earthly potentate but the head of the heavenly hosts who are opposed to God. The first battle is fought in heaven. The earthly confederacy, which is the counterpart of the dragon, cannot be a merely political combination. The wild beast comes forth at Satan's call, and insists on worship as well as fealty. Once we see that the whole world, just before the time of the end, is to be divided into four great religious federations, and the western one a decemvirate, we are able to orientate ourselves, and determine our true relation to these coming events, for this is very nearly the present status of the religious world.

The presence of the false prophet, doing signs, and calling for worship, as well as the great image with its miraculous powers, are in themselves sufficient to settle the sacerdotal scope of this section.

The hundred forty-four thousand reappear in the

company of the Lambkin. In the midst of the prevailing religious prostitution they are celibates (14:1-5).

The eonian evangel, preached to all on earth, calls upon men to worship their Maker (14:7).

It is the worship of the wild beast which draws down the judgments of this section (14:9-12). The harvest and grapevine are both reaped at the instance of a messenger out of the temple (14:15-19).

The figure of the bowls is taken from the temple furniture. The previous seals and trumpets were associated with the administration of government, in peace and in war. The civil power, suggested by the seals, is enforced by the trumpets, the military arm of government. But the bowls are closely connected with Babylon and the religious apostates of the chosen nation.

The binding of Satan and the corresponding millennial reign compose the climax of this section. Satan, the god of this eon (2 Cor. 4:4) will not blind the minds of the peoples of the earth until the close of the thousand years. It will be a day of unhindered worship through the priestly offices of Israel.

But the most suggestive of all are the two temple openings (11:19; 15:5), which divide this section into two parts. In the first, Jehovah's covenant is seen; in the second, the testimony, or law. In both, the judgments are based on God's previous dealings with His people Israel. First, He remembers His covenant to bless them and make them a blessing; second, He judges the law-breakers among them by that holy law which He gave them at Sinai. If we would view these judgments aright we must view all from the vantage of the temple and its ritual.

In the former division of the Temple Section we are given an insight into the false religions of this eon and are shown how they are under the control of Satan and his minions. We are fully informed of the conflict between Judaism, the one true religion (there is no divine

religion in this economy), and the various Satanic cults among the nations. These will unite under the leadership of Satan's human emissary and use their combined force to blot out the knowledge of God. Then Christ Himself comes and consigns Satan to his prison, and consumes his rebellious host.

In the latter division of the Temple Section, Jehovah deals with the defection of His own people Israel, according to the law He gave them. Their many prerogatives and privileges greatly increase the measure of their guilt, hence the bowls are the severest of all the terrific visitations of this judgment era. The extended account of great Babylon shows how much God's heart is affected by the apostasy of His own people.

Perhaps one hindrance to the great truth we are seeking to enforce, lies in the unfortunate chapter break which puts the introductory vision to the succeeding section at the end of chapter eleven, with which it has no connection. May God help all who seek to understand this Unveiling to grasp the special significance of the Temple Section, and view all its events in their true religious light! It will be of the greatest help, not only to the intelligent understanding of this prophecy, but it is also the key which unlocks some of the deepest difficulties of Daniel's visions.

We are through with the Throne. The political sovereignty of the earth is in the hands of Jehovah and His Anointed. Now we should charge our hearts to attend to the Temple, and see the sacerdotal supremacy of the earth pass from the hands of pontiff and prelate, Brahmatma and Lama and Caliph, into the hands of Him Who will be a Priest for the eon according to the order of Melchisedec.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 12:1-6

12 And a great sign was seen in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon underneath her feet, and on her head a wreath of twelve stars. ²And, being pregnant, she is crying, travailing, and being tormented to be bringing forth.

³And another sign was viewed in heaven, and *lo!* a great fiery-red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads seven diadems. ⁴And its tail is dragging a third of the stars of heaven, and cast them into the earth. And the dragon stands in sight of the woman who is about to be bringing forth, that it should be devouring her child whenever she may be bringing forth. ⁵And she brought forth a son, a male, who is about to be shepherding all the nations with an iron club. And her child is snatched away to God and to His throne. ⁶And the woman fled into the wilderness, there where she has a place made ready by God, that there they may be nurturing her a thousand two hundred sixty days.

THE SUN-CLOTHED WOMAN AND HER MALE SON

THE first "sign" in the Unveiling, specifically so called, is that of the sun-clothed woman, with the moon beneath her feet, in the throes of bringing forth the male son. Strange as it may seem at first, signs are not associated with the political aspect of the kingdom proclamation. The first three accounts of our Lord's life are practically devoid of signs, except the sign of Jonah, which was fulfilled in our Lord's burial and resurrection. He tells them that a wicked and adulterous generation seeks for a sign and would not be accommodated. In John's account, however, there are many signs, the first of which is the turning of water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11). There are striking similarities and contrasts when the first sign in John's account of our Lord's life is compared with the first sign in his record of Christ's unveiling.

Cana sets forth the joys of the millennial era when Israel, under the new covenant, will celebrate her union with Jehovah for a thousand years. In the Unveiling we see Israel, before the new covenant is ratified, under the figure of two women, one faithful to her marriage vows, the other, great Babylon, in covenant with the nations, faithless and false. In neither case are the joys during the reign of Christ in view, but the sufferings which precede His advent.

It seems superfluous to insist that the sun-clothed woman is faithful Israel. In our introduction to "The

Mystery of Babylon'', as well as in other writings on the subject, we have fully shown that Israel's covenant relationship to Jehovah is figured by a wife or a bride. Such a relationship is never connected with His title "Christ". There is no such thing as "the bride of *Christ*" known in the Scriptures. Christ is the title of an *office*. It is a spiritual relationship rather than a physical one. We are united to Him by spiritual ties, hence have a much more intimate and vital union with Him as members of His body. When Paul desires to enforce the mutual duties of the marriage relation, he does not appeal to the figure of a bride, but of a body. Husbands are to love their wives as *their own* bodies, because such is our relationship to Him (Eph. 5:28).

In the restoration of the earth, brought before us in the first chapter of Genesis, we are first introduced to the three heavenly features of this sign. There the sun and moon are set to be luminaries for the earth, the sun to rule the day and the moon to rule the night, as well as the stars (Gen. 1:14-18). These luminaries are said to be signs. They, like the scene we are considering, have a spiritual significance. They figure the spiritual illumination and rule of the earth. Only He Who called Himself the Light of the World can be suggested by the sun. He will rule when earth's day dawns. The moon's dim reflection of His glory was seen in the law, and the stars are beautiful similes of Abraham's spiritual seed, just as the seashore sand is of his physical progeny.

When is earth's day? Hitherto we have had man's "day", but it has been very dark. The sun certainly has not been shining. Earth's illumination waits until the Sun of righteousness arises. The light we have makes us sons of light and sons of the day, but we can never claim to disperse the darkness. Only in the day of Jehovah shall the knowledge of God flood the earth. Not till then does the Sun arise. At that time we, the members of His body, will not be here. We will shine in other,

celestial spheres. The illumination of the earth is Israel's prerogative. She is clothed with Christ, to enlighten and to rule the earth.

The nations, or gentiles, have no relation to the law. It was not given to them. They were never subject to it. Israel alone was illuminated by its cold and lifeless rays. It proved a snare to the unbelievers in the nation and brought them into bondage. But it is not so to the believers in Israel. Clothed in Christ, the law is beneath their feet. In the second part of this section we find the law again, as it affects the apostate part of the nation. When the "testimony" (the scroll of the law) is bared to view, it brings down the severest series of judgments of which we have any record. The seven bowls are poured out upon those who break God's holy law. Not so with those clothed with Christ. It cannot enslave them. It cannot condemn them. They walk in its light.

The stars speak of Abraham's promised spiritual seed. The twelve stars, like the twelve foundations of the new Jerusalem (Un. 21:14), can be no others than the twelve apostles who are Israel's spiritual heroes. The number twelve is peculiarly and appropriately confined to the twelve-tribed nation. The fact that Paul has no place in this wreath is sufficient to rule us out of the picture, for he is the apostle of the nations, the Uncircumcision. Here we are concerned only with the Circumcision. It may be that the twelve stars also suggest the patriarchs, and the twelve tribes, as in Joseph's dream (Gen. 37:9).

Here, then, we have a figure of the faithful nation at the time of the end. She is brought before us at the crisis of her sorest trial. Within the nation, and the cause of their travail, will be a select company, variously described in this Unveiling. In the prophetic section those of marked faithfulness are called conquerors. In Thyatira such a one is promised authority over the nations, and shall be shepherding them with an iron club

(Un. 2: 26, 27). In the throne section the select company is described by number—twelve thousand out of each tribe of Israel (7: 4-8). They are quite distinct from the vast throng of Israel's redeemed (7: 9, 10). In this section they are referred to as a firstfruit to God and the Lambkin (14: 4).

The "male son", who emerges at the time of Israel's travail, is probably the same company elsewhere known as the hundred forty-four thousand, or the conquerors. As the woman is not an actual individual, the male son cannot consistently be such. As all of these selected saints come forth at the time of the great affliction, as all are noted for their fidelity in the midst of faithlessness, as all are specially favored and protected during the time of trial, and as all are destined to be invested with special honor and authority in the kingdom, they are probably identical, being viewed from various aspects in each section. Their special prerogative seems to be the rule of the nations. Israel will be under the twelve apostles, but the outside world will be subject to the hundred forty-four thousand, or the male son.

The *masculinity* of this special selection of saints is very striking indeed, when contrasted with the pervading figure, which is feminine. In covenant with Jehovah, Israel is a married woman. But there is a group within the nation which is markedly male. The one hundred forty-four thousand are celibates, who have nothing to do with women (14: 4). The company in the sign before us is called a *male son*. The reason is that they are viewed in relation to the nations whom they are to rule. They will not be linked to them by a covenant, but, with virile vigor, will rule them with rigor. The millennial reign will not consist of mere mutual agreements, of ententes and leagues. It will be a despotism. The law will go forth from Jerusalem and will be enforced among all nations by an iron club in the hands of those who are here called the male son.

Few of the key phrases of Scriptures are as defective and discordant as the rendering "man child". Neither *man* nor *child* is correct, yet the expression has become imbedded in our speech and literature. Of the three words translated "man", this one has the least title to it, for English has an exact equivalent, and there is no reason whatever why it should not be used. But the archaic "man child", for a male infant, will be difficult to displace, even though the added "son" shows that, though newly born, it was not a helpless infant by any means.

In the Scriptures there is a vast distinction between childhood and sonship, which is too often obliterated by our versions. Sonship involves a maturity, a dignity, a likeness which is not necessarily the case with childhood. All who believe are children. All have God for their Father. But it is only in the measure in which we represent Him to others that we are sons. As many as are being led by God's spirit, these are sons of God (Rom. 8:14). There is safety and satisfaction for us in the certainty that we are God's children. There is glory and honor for Him when we act as His sons should conduct themselves. At present this is but a feeble intimation of the full dignity which will be ours in resurrection. Not till then will God's sons be revealed to the world, and He will be revealed in them.

This is what is involved in the expression here used. Those who emerge from Israel in the time of her trial will be God's representatives among the nations. They will be like the great Firstborn. He will be shepherding the nations with an iron club (Un. 19:15). So will they (12:5). They will be the vicegerents of the King of kings and Lord of lords in the glorious day of His exaltation. Through them His dominion will be administered from pole to pole, from Jerusalem to the remotest corners of the earth.

Since the destiny of the male son is to rule with an

iron club, the action of the sign is readily understood. The dragon, as we shall see, is the real ruler of the nations now, and, like Herod, it seeks to destroy its rival at the very earliest moment (12:4). But there comes an immediate and powerful intervention on the part of God. They are separated from the mass of the nation, which flees into the wilderness, and are sustained by divine power, in a place where the dragon dares not follow. In much the same fashion the hundred forty-four thousand are shielded from the "four winds" by the seal of the living God in their foreheads (7:2-4). Later we find them on mount Zion (14:1).

We have already seen how God measures a temple and an altar and worshipers with a reed like a rod (11:1). It is probable that mount Zion will be the first spot on earth to be seized and held subject to God's throne. Here He will sustain a select company with power while the rest of His faithful followers flee into the wilderness or give their lives for their faith. Our Lord foretold this flight (Mat. 24:15-22; Mark 13:14-20). These passages should be read carefully in this connection. When the desolating detestation is set up, all in Judea are warned to flee to the mountains with the utmost haste. It is the signal for affliction unparalleled since the dawn of creation.

The woman flees into the wilderness, where she also is sustained in a miraculous manner. In a specially prepared place, probably in the rocky fastnesses southeast of Judea, where no food is found, she is nurtured as in the days when she was brought through this same region under Moses. In crags accessible only to vultures (Un. 12:14), they remain hidden until the indignation is past. The same beautiful figure is used of the exodus from Egypt. He bore them on vultures' wings and brought them to Himself (Ex. 19:4). At that time the waters of the Red sea helped them. In the future the earth will help them. It would seem that, by a decree of

the dragon, vast reservoirs of water will be loosed upon the fleeing host, but, by some convulsion or earthquake, the earth opens up and swallows the onrushing wall of water, and saves them from being carried away and drowned.

One of the most remarkable features of Jerusalem's location is its closeness to the wilderness. The country from Olive's ridge down to the Dead Sea and a vast region to the south, all the way to the gulf of Akaba, with the rough and rugged heights of mount Seir to the east, is unutterably desolate and inhospitable. It contains deep canyons and rocky heights. There are hardly any settled habitations, for there is no means of sustenance. Here is the ancient city of Petra, hewn out of the solid rock. It seems to be an ideal place of refuge under the circumstances, and has often been suggested as the future hiding place of Israel's saints in their time of trial. But none of this, at present, would be a secure retreat against modern weapons and airplanes, unless it is protected, in some special way yet unknown to us. If this is the place, it will need to be miraculously prepared, for both defense and sustenance, and this is according to the promise.

The dragon, having been foiled in its attempts to destroy the woman, now turns its attention to those who were not included in this exodus. Evidently there will be faithful ones all over the earth, who are not in Jerusalem or its vicinity when these things occur. These now become the object of its anger. Doubtless these are the vast throng which no one was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and languages, who come out of the great affliction (Un. 7:9-14). They probably seal their testimony with their lives.

Unlike the previous divisions, the Temple Section begins in the middle, rather than at the beginning of Daniel's sevenieth heptad. The first half is passed over without comment. The setting up of the desolating detestation (Dan. 9:27) is the signal for the flight from

Judea and the commencement of the great affliction. Hence the woman is nurtured for the balance of the heptad, a thousand two hundred sixty days (Un. 12:6), or a season, seasons and half a season (12:14), that is, until the glorious appearing of their Messiah on His white horse (19:11) and Satan is bound in the abyss (20:2).

In like manner, the scope of this section is limited in the future. The Throne Section not only commences earlier, at the beginning of the seventieth heptad, but it leads to a reign for the eons of the eons. The Temple Section is followed by the millennium, or thousand-year dominion of Israel as the priest nation. As kings they will reign until the consummation. As priests they will officiate only during the day of Jehovah. There will be no priesthood in the new earth, for God will be in touch with all mankind.

One further thought is too important to pass in this connection. At the time of the end Israel will be divided into various companies, of unequal privileges and varied destinies. There are at least three distinct "bodies". One of these has been seized upon with great avidity by some of the saints in order to give themselves a superior position to others less enlightened or less faithful, in their estimation. It will not be surprising if, when we come to review the history of the church in the glory, we should find that millions claimed to be in the hundred forty-four thousand, and great numbers have sought to secure a place as the "man child". They will be agreeably disappointed to find that the highest place in Israel will not compare with their true place in Christ Jesus.

Let us leave these companies in their proper place and time. We are *one* body, and *only one*. Being the objects of pure, unadulterated, limitless grace, we all have present privileges and a future destiny as high above the "man child" as heaven is high above the earth. We are not divided by our attainments or lack of them.

Neither our present position among the saints nor the future rewards for service and suffering can affect the great and vital unity of the spirit. We should glory in this, rather than a fancied superiority, whether based on experience or knowledge. We have nothing which we have not received through God's grace. He lavishes this on all. We are one—one body, one faith, one expectation. May He give us grace to revel in it!

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 12:7-17

⁷And a battle occurred in heaven. Michael and his messengers battle with the dragon, and the dragon battles, and its messengers. ⁸And they are not strong enough for him, neither was their place still found in heaven.

⁹And the great dragon was cast down, who is the ancient serpent called Slanderer and Satan, who is deceiving the whole inhabited earth. It was cast into the earth, and its messengers were cast with it. ¹⁰And I hear a loud voice in heaven saying: *"Now came the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ, seeing that the accuser of our brethren was cast down, who was accusing them in the sight of our God day and night. ¹¹And they conquer him through the blood of the Lambkin, and because of the word of their testimony, and they love not their soul until death. ¹²Therefore, make merry, O heavens, and those who are tabernacling in them! Woe to the land and the sea, seeing that the Slanderer descended to you having great fury, being aware that the season he has is brief."*

¹³And when the dragon perceived that it was cast into the earth, it persecutes the woman who brought forth the male. ¹⁴And the two wings of a large vulture were given to the woman that she may be flying into the wilderness into her place there, where she is nurtured a season and seasons and half a season from the face of the serpent. ¹⁵And the serpent cast water as a river out of its mouth behind the woman that she should be carried away by its current. ¹⁶And the earth helps the woman, and the earth opens its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon cast out of its mouth. ¹⁷And the dragon is angry with the woman, and came away to do battle with the rest of her seed, who are keeping the precepts of God and who have the testimony of Jesus.

MICHAEL AND THE DRAGON

THE second sign in the Unveiling is described as a great fiery-red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads seven diadems. And its tail is dragging a third of the stars of heaven, and casts them to the earth (12:3-4). The dragon is usually supposed to be a mythical animal, a lizard-like serpent without any representative in nature. But this does not seem to be the case in the Scriptures. Our translators have often used the term as the equivalent of the Hebrew *tannin* or *tanninim*, which includes all serpent-like monsters, both in the past (Gen. 1:21), and the future (Isa. 13:22). In Genesis it seems to refer to those monstrous saurians whose skeletons are found in our museums, and who roamed the earth in its early eras. These were sometimes shaped quite like the dragon of mythology. Aaron's rod was turned into a "dragon" before Pharaoh (Ex. 7:9-12). Our translators have called the monster a *whale*, a *serpent*, and a *sea monster* as well as a dragon. The Greek translators of the Hebrew have given *drakōn* an even wider application. They use it of a *young lion*, of *leviathan*, of a *serpent*, of a *goat*, and of an *asp*, as well as of the monsters usually called dragons. In these cases it evidently is used to present to the mind the most terrible and dangerous form of animal life. It is the antithesis of the lambkin, which is the most gentle and harmless. As the dragon is also called a serpent (12:14, 15) and had a tail (12:4) it can readily be pictured in the mind as a hideous serpentine monstrosity.

The enormous size and bloodthirsty color of this

dragon make it a most impressive picture of evil malevolence. It is especially intended to represent Satan's character and activity at the time of the end. In the beginning he is presented as a subtle serpent, insinuating and deceptive. There was no fiery dragon in Eden's garden. The serpent assumed the rôle of benefactor, desirous of helping humanity to the highest knowledge and attainment. The object was to beguile their hearts from allegiance to God by false and fatuous promises. But there was no violence. We cannot think of the serpent in Eden as gigantic or dreadfully colored. It did not inspire fear but confidence. There was no resort to force. Eve was not compelled to eat. The great dragon is in marked contrast to this. It signifies ferocious power which attacks all opposition, devours all its opponents, and imposes its will on all mankind.

Satan seeks to attain his ends by diverse means. He suits his character to the occasion. The subtle serpent of Eden is the dreadful dragon of the Unveiling. At one time he is an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14); at another he is a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8). There may be room for a difference of opinion as to which is his more dangerous disguise. Of one thing we may be sure, if he were a red dragon or a roaring lion today, few would be deceived. But how many are utterly deluded by his peaceful arts in this era! To them Satan is always a creature repulsive with horns and hoofs. They cannot conceive of him as an angel of light. To them angels are always good, and light is always associated with right. The good and the right are the lures he uses in this day to attract worship for himself. And his servants are dispensers of righteousness.

The fatal tendency of the church to pass from spiritual to moral issues, from evangelical effort to social sanitation, are but symptoms that the god of this eon is blinding the minds of the unbelievers in it. These things are good and right, hence, they reason, they must be of

God. They cannot see that these are but a bait used to secure their allegiance, a blind employed to assure their worship! Satan, today, is most utterly unlike the great red dragon of the Unveiling. Indeed, if the nominal church were to choose a St. George to slay this dragon, they would probably choose the luminous angel who has displaced Christ in their worship. Thus they would list Satan against himself, so thoroughly has he deceived them!

While this sign is Satan personally, it includes others who are associated with him, just as the figure of the Lambkin with seven horns and seven eyes included the seven spirits, and "the Christ" includes the members of His body. The seven heads and ten horns introduce us to the great Satanic confederacy which will control the earth at the time of the end. In the book of Daniel the veil is thrust aside for a moment and we are given a glimpse of a spiritual conflict and organization which will help us to see the significance of the seven heads and ten horns of the dragon. There we read of a spirit prince of Persia and another of Greece, and that Michael was the prince of Israel (Dan. 10:20, 21).

There is every reason to believe that earth's kings are but shadows of spirit powers, and earth's conflicts but the thunder of celestial lightning. Since Satan claims the suzerainty of all the kingdoms of the world (Mat. 4:8, 9), and Christ did not dispute his word, he must be the secret sovereign of the world, or, rather, the god of all nations, for it was *worship* rather than fealty which he required of Christ. Once this is granted, we can readily see that such a stupendous government must be organized and its powers delegated to subordinates. Even in the coming kingdom Christ will delegate His power to the apostles and to the hundred forty-four thousand. So, at the end, the earth will be apportioned into distinct administrative districts, differing from one another along religious or military lines.

The wild beast (13:1) is a composite figure with precisely the same features as the dragon, having ten horns and seven heads. The dragon gives it authority over every tribe and people and language and nation. The conclusion is obvious. The earth will be divided into seven divisions of some sort and one of these divisions will be further subdivided into ten powerful parts. We are bordering so closely on the end time that these seven sections of mankind ought to be partially apparent now. Such we believe to be the case. The reason that we have not hitherto recognized them is because we have been solely occupied with political divisions and this section of the Unveiling lays stress on the religious rather than the political phase of Satanic suzerainty.

Daniel, in his seventh chapter, undoubtedly deals with that phase of earth's religious organization which immediately precedes the emergence of the wild beast. Indeed, when the fourth monster devours the other three, it necessarily results in one nondescript having the subdivisions of all four. The four wild beasts of Daniel had seven heads and ten horns among them, so the one wild beast of the Unveiling has the same seven heads and ten horns. This vision of Daniel's differs from that of the great image in two important points, time and character. The great image was political and consecutive. One kingdom followed another. The beasts are religious and contemporary. The first three are devoured by the fourth and this is the wild beast seen by John in the Unveiling.

If this be so, then the present arrangement of religious powers in the earth should correspond to the seventh of Daniel and should point toward that of the one wild beast in the Unveiling, which corresponds with the composition of the dragon. The moment we turn our thoughts from political to religious power our eyes are opened to a most remarkable correspondence between these visions and the religious divisions of mankind. The

first three beasts of Daniel were *east* (Dan. 7:7, "before") of the fourth, hence are eastern religions. The fourth is a western religion. And that is precisely the situation today. The west has only one dominating religion, Christianity. The east has three, Mohammedanism, Brahmanism, and Buddhism. Sects outside of these are negligible.

Moreover, it is the western beast which is equipped with horns, which speak of military power. And even now the west dominates the east by means of its armament, out of all proportion to population. Mohammedan territory is largely under the mandate of Great Britain, France or Spain; Brahmanism, in India, is restless under the British yoke. Buddhism in China is seeking to throw off foreign interference. Even the United States, one of the most formidable of the Christian nations, though opposed in principle to such a thing, maintained its heaviest military force in the Philippines. The stage is set for the final conflict between the east and the west.

A more detailed identification of the beasts and the horns does not seem possible at present. In the swiftly moving kaleidoscope of modern events it is not safe to forsake the seat of a student for the part of a prophet. It would be easy, however, at almost any time to make a list of just ten Christian military powers, though these may change from time to time. And it is evident that all the influence which is being brought to bear with a view to disarmament will do little to clip the brazen nails or pull the iron teeth of the monster which masks under the name of Christianity and flies the pennant of the Prince of Peace.

The identification of the beast and the dragon with "the restored Roman empire" has no scriptural basis. Daniel mentions Babylonia and Medo-Persia and Greece, but never refers to Rome. It never was a world kingdom, even in its palmiest days. It never really conquered Babylon, the seat of previous world sovereignties. If we con-

fine the fourth beast of Daniel to the territory of ancient Rome, we have a coalition of Italy, Spain, France, and England against the world. We must leave off Scotland and Ireland, for they never were part of Rome's dominions. Except Spain, these three powers, aided by the enormous Russian hosts, could not subjugate the central powers without the help of the United States. How, then, could they do this with Russia and the United States against them?

The kingdom of the end time, the sphere of the dragon's sway, is over *all* the earth, not merely a small section of Europe and Asia. It will be divided into seven administrative heads, or spirit overlords, who will dictate the policy of the human heads of the wild beast. Even now invisible, imperceptible spirit powers control the course of kingdoms and rule republics. Men imagine that they are "responsible", and really control the destinies of nations. They are but puppets in unseen spirit hands, which, in their turn, are also unconsciously performing the part assigned to them by Him Who overrules where He does not rule, and guides the universe to its appointed goal.

In the A. V., two different Greek words are translated "crown". One of them is *stephanos*, a *wreath*, a *chaplet*. The other is *diadêma*, *diadem*. There has been a strong tendency to associate the latter exclusively with royalty, the former with victory and achievement. But the fact remains that *stephanos* is used freely in the Greek translations of the Hebrew scriptures of a king's golden crown (2 Sam. 12:30) and evidently unites the two thoughts of reward and rule, for only those who have conquered are entitled to reign. Diadem, were it the special word for a king's crown, would be used many more times than it is. Diadems are seen only three times in the Scriptures, on the heads of the dragon (12:3), on the horns of the wild beast (13:1), and on the head of the Rider on the White Horse (19:12).

These facts are most suggestive. "*Diadem*" occurs only in the religious section of the *Unveiling*. If it is a royal crown it should be frequent in the Throne Section, but it is absent. Why is it here? We submit that it indicates *ecclesiastical* authority, corresponding to the mitre of the chief priest or the papal pontiff. If the seven heads of the dragon supervise seven distinct religious divisions of the earth, it is most likely that their "crowns" or insignia express the character of their authority.

This seems to be confirmed by a fact which, at first sight, seems most incongruous. The diadems are on the heads of the dragon, but *not* on the heads of the wild beast. Instead they are on its *horns*. Its heads are crowned with blasphemous names. Though the dragon should delegate spiritual authority to its heads, it is not likely that Christendom, if it conquers the world by the sword, would delegate ecclesiastical authority to any of its subordinate rulers except those who are of that name. Only the horns are nominally Christian, and they reserve all religious authority in their own hands. Instead, in that spirit of compromise which is already corrupting so-called Christianity, an effort will be made to include in it a reverence for all religious leaders and the blasphemous names of Mohammed, of Siva, Vishnu or Brahma, or of Gotama Buddha may well adorn the heads of those eastern divisions of the great empire of the end time. This, of course, is only suggestive.

When heaven opens, and the white horse Rider appears (19:11, 12), His head bears *many* diadems. How significant this is when we recall the seven diadems of the dragon and those on the ten horns of the wild beast! All the ecclesiastical authority which was claimed by them is now His. Theirs will be a bloodless, Bibleless Christianity. He is clothed in a cloak dipped in blood, and His name is called "The Word of God." These are the ground and source of all real religious rule. The

power of the blood of Christ and the authority of the Word of God will replace corrupt Christianity and govern a renewed earth for a thousand years. Not only will all political dominion be His, but He alone, as a royal Priest according to the order of Melchisedec, will rule in the religious sphere as well.

The tail of the dragon may well signify its following. It would seem that one-third of the starry host will cast in their lot with the Adversary. It is quite usual to apply this beautiful figure to the sons of God. When the earth was first founded "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). But there undoubtedly has been defection among the heavenly hosts. It is not safe to draw conclusions from the word "angel". Many times, when it refers to men, it has been made angel. Those kept in imperceptible bonds under gloom for the judgment of the great day, who sinned, and were thrust into the gloomy caverns of Tartarus (2 Pet. 2:4) may be Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Num. 16:1-3). But this sign brings before us a future angelic apostasy, for, at the time when Satan assumes the form of a dragon, he is *dragging* a third of the stars to earth with him.

The action of this sign takes place at the same time as that of the first sign. Satan assumes the rôle of a dragon only after he lays aside his luminous robes of righteousness, and leaves the disguise of a deceiver to play the part of a ferocious adversary. The reason is not far to seek. The saints of this economy have no right to rule the earth. We do not come into conflict with Satan here. Ours is a celestial warfare (Eph. 6:12). But after we have been recalled to our place with Christ in the heavens, and Israel is once more in view, as figured by the woman in the previous sign, then Satan's earthly sovereignty is in jeopardy and he hastens to do his utmost to destroy those who threaten his usurpation. Hence his enmity to the male son, who is about to be

shepherding all nations with an iron club in that day.

Satan's suzerainty over the earth is real, though unrecognized, even by many of the saints. This is especially true in the religious sphere. He is actually acknowledged to be the god of this eon (2 Cor. 4:4). His success has been phenomenal. After the body of Christ has been caught up to be with Christ, his goal seems in sight. All the earth seems to submit to his sovereignty and bows before his shrine. Only among the faithful, suffering remnant of Israel has he failed. Moreover, with a pre-science unequaled by many of God's saints, he discovers the danger before it occurs. The future rulers of the earth, when they emerge from the mass of Israel, when they take a stand for God, are in danger of destruction. Satan makes every effort to do away with them at the very beginning. And, doubtless, he would accomplish his purpose but for direct divine intervention.

The conflict on earth precipitates a corresponding clash in heaven. Milton's melodious numbers have led many to miss the cause of this battle among the celestial hosts, and to shift it back into primeval eras before the cause existed. It will not occur until after Satan, as the dragon, has sought to destroy the woman and her male son. This act on his part stirs heaven's hosts and brings Michael to their help, for he is the champion of Israel, the nation of God's choice. Satan does not start a rebellion to overthrow God's throne. He is not on the offensive at all. He is on the defensive. Michael is the aggressor, and he moves against the dragon because it is seeking to annihilate the nation which is his special charge.

Satan is popularly supposed to preside in "hell". He not only has never been there, but there is no ground for believing that he ever will be. Hitherto he has had access to both heaven and earth, as in the days of Job (Job 1:6, 7). As the dragon, he first appears in heaven (Un. 12:3). Then he comes down to earth. After that we find him in heaven, battling with Michael. Then he is

chained in the abyss for a thousand years (20:1,2). Then he reappears on earth for a short period (20:7-9). Thence he is cast into the lake of fire for the eons (20:10). So he is never in the popular "hell", as is usually supposed.

His function, as in Job's day, is to accuse the saints. How could he accomplish this without access into the presence of God? But the office of *diabolos* or slanderer has no place in the coming eons. In them God's saints will have imparted as well as imputed righteousness. There will be no necessity for a "devil's advocate". His presence in heaven, doubtless to accuse those brethren who compose the male son, who have been snatched out of his grasp, and those who belong to the woman who escaped into the wilderness, with a view to permission from God to destroy them or deal with them as he had with Job, is the signal for his expulsion from the counsels of the Almighty. So Michael leads his messengers against Satan's hosts and ejects him from the heavens.

Our knowledge of the chief messenger Michael is most fragmentary. Thrice he is mentioned in Daniel's prophecy, and twice in the Greek Scriptures. He is always connected with conflict. He is always associated with the people of the covenant. When the marvelous man who was sent to Daniel explained his delayed appearance, he said, "The chief of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but *lo!* Michael, one of the foremost chiefs, came to help me." Here, as in the Unveiling, he fights for Daniel and his people. Later on he explains further that there was no one who strengthened himself concerning these things but Michael, their chief (Dan. 10:13, 21).

Jude tells us that Michael, doubting the Slanderer, argued concerning the body of Moses. Yet he dares not bring a calumniating judgment, but said, "May the Lord rebuke you!" This shows that these two antagonists had met before, and that Michael recognized the

power and dignity of his adversary. He might easily have called him a liar, for such he was (John 8:44). But he evidently did not consider himself his superior, if his equal, in dominion and glory. Moreover, such a charge, even if true, was more in keeping with the Adversary's office, than with the service of a chief messenger. We must not fail to note, however, that Michael considered it his duty to protect the body of Moses, the great prophet of Israel.

In Daniel's last vision we are brought up to the very time and event which we are at present considering. "And in that era shall Michael stand up, the great chief who stands for the sons of your people; and there shall be an era of distress such as never was since there was a nation until that era: and in that era your people shall be delivered, all who are found written in the scroll" (Dan. 12:1). How closely this concurs with the account in the Unveiling! Michael "stands up" and casts down to earth the Slanderer, who immediately inaugurates a furious anti-Semitic persecution such as has never yet been known.

Michael is, therefore, the logical leader of heaven's hosts against the destroyer of the holy people. He has fought for them before. It is his duty and his privilege. So, when the dragon seeks to devour the male son, he mobilizes his messengers and meets the dragon and his messengers and wins the most momentous victory in the annals of heaven, or indeed, of the universe. Hitherto wrong has been recognized and had a place in the divine providence. Satan had his place among the sons of God in heaven. Now wrong is repudiated, Satan is cast down, banished from the celestial courts, imprisoned on the earth. It is the crisis of the eons, the turning point in universal history. The heavens are cleared of rebellion. It is concentrated on the earth.

No wonder heaven is jubilant! Though the kingdom is still unknown on earth, so far as heaven is concerned,

it is established. The Slanderer himself realizes this, for he is aware that he has little time left. All his well laid plans have been frustrated. His dark deceptions have been undone. He becomes desperate. Cunning gives place to fury. He will do as much damage as possible in the brief era still at his disposal. The male son is beyond his reach. So he concentrates on the woman and on the rest of her seed. He would leave no Israelite alive for the kingdom. He would blot out the name of Jēhōvāh from the earth.

As we shall see, his method for the accomplishment of this hideous massacre is carried out through the agency of the two wild beasts who represent him among mankind. When they set up the "desolating detestation", the image of the wild beast, in the temple in Jerusalem, that will be the signal for all faithful Israelites to flee to the mountains. Our Lord warned them of this time and told them where to go. We may not be able to give the right explanation to the enigmatic language which describes this flight. As Jehovah brought them out of Egypt into the wilderness on vultures' wings (Ex. 19:4), so He will bring them into the almost inaccessible crags of the Judean wilderness. It may be that they will flee down one of the gorges which lead to the Dead Sea and he causes the reservoirs of the city to be emptied in order to drown them in their flight. As the water stood aside to let them pass through the Red Sea, so will the earth open up and swallow the wall of water which is sent after them.

When the dragon sees that the woman has escaped its fury it turns its attention to those Jews who are still dispersed among the nations, and gluts itself with their blood. There is no intimation that they receive miraculous protection such as is afforded the male son or the woman. They probably swell the ranks of the martyred. All this is in keeping with God's dealings with the favored nation. Not being on the ground of pure grace,

such as we enjoy, they are classified according to their faithfulness. The most deserving are the male son, hence they receive total immunity from suffering and the greatest reward in the kingdom. Then come the Jerusalem saints, who dwell in the land, where they ought to be. They will be protected through much affliction. Those at a distance receive no protection, nor so high a reward as their more favored brethren.

CHAPTER 13:1-18

13 And it was standing on the sand of the sea. And I perceived a wild beast ascending out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on its horns ten diadems, and on its heads blasphemous names. ²And the wild beast which I perceived was like a leopard, and its feet were as a bear's, and its mouth as the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gives it its power and its throne and great authority. ³And one of its heads was as it had been slain to death, and its death blow was cured, and the whole earth marvels after the wild beast. ⁴And they worship the dragon, seeing that it gives authority to the wild beast, and they worship the wild beast, saying, "Who is like the wild beast?" and "Who is able to battle with it?" ⁵And to it was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. And to it was given authority to do what it wills forty-two months. ⁶And it opens its mouth in blasphemies toward God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, and those tabernacling in heaven. ⁷And to it was given to do battle with the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given to it over every tribe and people and language and nation. ⁸And all who are dwelling on the earth will be worshipping it, everyone whose name is not written in the scroll of life of the Lambkin Which has been slain from the disruption of the world.

⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ If anyone is for captivity, into captivity he is going. If anyone will be killing with the sword, he must with the sword be killed. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints.

¹¹And I perceived another wild beast ascending out of the land, and it had two horns like a lambkin, and it talked as a dragon. ¹²And it is exercising all the authority of the first wild beast in its sight, and making the earth and those dwelling in it to be worshipping the first wild beast whose death blow was cured.

¹³And it is doing great signs, that it may be causing fire, also, to descend out of heaven into the earth in the sight of mankind. ¹⁴And it is deceiving those dwelling on the earth because of the signs which were given it to do in the sight of the wild beast, saying to those dwelling on the earth to make an image to the wild beast which has the blow of the sword and lives. ¹⁵And it was given to it to give spirit to the image of the wild beast, that the image of the wild beast should be talking also, and should be causing that whoever should not be worshipping the image of the wild beast may be killed.

¹⁶And it is causing all, small and great, and rich and poor, and free and slaves, that an emblem may be given them on their right hand, or on their forehead, ¹⁷ and that no one may be able to buy or sell except the one having the emblem of the wild beast, or its name, or the number of its name.

¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has a mind calculate the number of the wild beast, for it is the number of mankind, and its number is six hundred sixty-six.

THE TWO WILD BEASTS

IN the twelfth chapter of the Unveiling we have an outline of the dragon's defeat in the heavens and of the failure of its effort to destroy the male son and the sun-clothed woman. It now turns to the rest of her seed, the faithful ones among the nations, as well as the apostates whose center is in Babylon, and it establishes its worship over all the other nations of the earth. In these operations it makes use of the great human organization which it has built up and especially energizes two men to carry out its behests. There are characterized as wild beasts. In the Authorized Version the use of the common term "beast" for the animals which are incorporated into God's throne (4:6) and these ferocious monsters is quite misleading and inexcusable. The Revisers have changed the former to "living ones" but they retain the simple word "beast" here. This is inadequate. The lion, the bullock, the man and the vulture are *animals*, while the leopard, the bear, the lion, and the nondescript are here merged into a ferocious *wild beast*.

It must be kept in mind that the Jews no longer refuse to swear allegiance to gentile governments and rulers. They have been naturalized in almost every country on earth. They have proven their patriotism on many a battlefield, often fighting against their own brethren. They would readily support any man who could gain the political supremacy of the earth. They will vote for him. They will fight for him. *But they will not worship him.* Up to the middle of Daniel's seventieth

heptad Satan presses the political supremacy of his human representative. Then the covenant with the Jews, allowing them to worship Jehovah, is broken. The daily offering ceases. Satan worship, in the person of the wild beast, is forced on mankind. It is fitting, therefore, that this part of the Unveiling should be occupied almost exclusively with the second half of Daniel's "week", which begins about three and a half years after the white horse rider commences his conquering career (6:2).

It is usually supposed that "Christianity" is based on supernatural manifestations. Few notions as false as this have been so readily received. Even theologians teach that our Lord appealed to His miraculous acts to confirm His message. In our own day it is usual to ascribe every supernatural occurrence, or what seems to be such, to the direct hand of God. It is Satan who appeals to miracles in these days and in the end time. He knows the overwhelming effect of a palpable miracle on the populace and begins his great effort for world-wide worship by working a wonder so nearly divine in its significance that it might easily deceive the very elect unless they had been forewarned.

There never was and there never will be a greater power, sign, wonder or miracle than the resurrection of Christ from the dead. So likewise, there had been no greater proof that He was God's Son than His ability to recall the dead to life. Vivification is God's prerogative. Satan has the jurisdiction of *death*, but he never could bring back to life. Now, however, God is back of Satan, and is sending those who have no love for the truth an "operation of deception", that they should believe the falsehood (2 Thes. 2:11). To all appearances, at least, Satan brings back to life one who had been slain. As this one died by the sword (13:14), it must have been involved in violence, possibly assassination. In the cryptic language of a later vision, it was, and is not, and is about to be ascending out of the abyss (17:8).

But Satan is too worldly-wise to raise a peasant of Palestine, such as Lazarus, or the son of the widow of Nain, or an obscure maiden who was unknown outside her own small circle. He picks a man well known in all the earth, the cynosure of a wondering world, a colossus who has raised himself to the zenith of political power by his military conquests and diplomatic successes. He selects a subject who occupies the center of the stage, whose every move is chronicled in the daily press, whose death engulfs the world in grief and whose assassination is the greatest sensation of the day. He chooses one who already had the political allegiance of all mankind, who had reconciled a warring world under one banner, and who promised to bring untold prosperity and peace, now that he had united all under his leadership.

In a day all these hopes are dashed to the ground. The great conqueror is killed. The vast confederacy he had created collapses when he is gone. No one is able to replace him. Chaos once more threatens to reign and not only destroy the fabric of the world empire he had founded, but menace the very existence of civilization. Humanity's one great need was a man capable of dominating and directing mankind, a superman capable of holding the helm of human government. He comes, and, in the zenith of his power and promise, sinks beneath the sword. His death accentuates the magnificence of his career, and the benefits which had come or were yet to accrue from his forced federation of the world.

This is the man and this is the moment for Satan's master miracle. To bring him back from the dead would not only restore him to supreme political power, but would assure him the homage and worship of the world, and through him Satan could claim the universal adoration of mankind. And thus it will be. The great conqueror of the end time will also be the head of one of the great religious divisions, probably of the nondescript monster with ten horns. That would make him the pope

as well as the political head of all Christendom, besides being the conqueror of the world. He will be like an emperor of ancient Rome, who was the *pontifex maximus* as well as the king of Rome and head of the empire. The same is true today of the king of England, for he is not only the head of the British empire but also the spiritual lord of the national church.

One of the puzzling points in the passages dealing with the wild beast is the way in which the wounded head seems to be identified with the whole. We read not only that “*one of its heads* was as it had been slain to death” (13:3), but also of “the *wild beast* which has the blow of the sword and lives” (13:14). It is evident that the wounded head has a double part. He is not only one of the heads but he is the dominating spirit of the entire confederacy. Just as the ruler of Rome was also the emperor, as the king of England is the head of the British empire, so the wounded head of one of earth’s seven subdivisions is the suzerain of all.

The dragon was standing on the sand of the sea (13:1). When the waters are symbolic in this book, they signify peoples and throngs and nations and languages (17:15). It is of these that the wild beast is composed. As a world kingdom it comes out of the confused tumult and restless surging of the peoples of the earth. When the wild beast is spoken of as an individual, it ascends from the abyss (11:7; 17:8). At first it ascends out of the sea as one of the heads of the wild beast. After it is slain it comes out of the abyss. And to it is given authority over every tribe and language and people and nation.

We have found many a striking contrast between the present grace as presented in Paul’s epistles, and the revelation of God’s wrath at the time of the end. The wild beasts and their career were spoken of by Paul in his second letter to the Thessalonians (2 Thes. 2:1-12). Some have deduced from this that “the church will go

through the tribulation''. Some suppose Paul's letter cannot refer to the present grace because of this. But the presence of a word, or the mere mention of a name, proves nothing apart from its bearing on the argument of the epistle. Paul's reasoning is based on the fact that these lawless men cannot be revealed until we are out of the way. So utterly different, so diametrically opposed, are God's dealings in these two eras, that it is absolutely impossible for both to be staged at the same time.

The first epistle to the Thessalonians is the earliest writing of the Greek Scriptures. The book of Acts gives us the kingdom side of Paul's ministry. The first intimation that there was to be another side is found in Thessalonians. The fact that the two letters to the Thessalonians are the very *beginning* of Paul's new departure leads us to expect that they should conform very closely to what we have in Acts, for much which is ours by grace was not revealed until a later time. Whatever tinge there may be of the kingdom message to Israel, however, is used as a background and a contrast. It is not carried over.

It has been suggested that angelic ministry is for Israel, and the presence of the archangel (1 Thes. 4:16) has to do with the kingdom, not the church. Granted that angelic *ministry* is for Israel, but the mere presence of the word *angel* or *messenger* surely proves nothing. It is used only once in the Thessalonian group (2 Thes. 1:7) and then concerns, not Christ's coming for us, but His unveiling when we are at ease. The word occurs ten times in the preparatory epistles, once in the perfection epistles and twice in the personal epistles. Its mere presence, therefore, is by no means indicative of kingdom teaching. But some insist that Michael, the archangel, is only for Israel. This is quite true. But Paul does not say that the archangel accompanies our Lord. He insists that the Lord *Himself* descends, not with an accompanying messenger, but with his *voice*.

Just so He sounds the trumpet of God. We surely cannot deduce from this that God accompanies Him! There is no angelic ministry whatever to the Thessalonians.

Nevertheless, to read Thessalonians intelligently, we must remember that we are reading about the boundaries of the present grace. Not only are we near the past frontiers of this economy, but we are occupied with its future conclusion and the succeeding administration of God's indignation, when the kingdom will once more be the subject of divine testimony. It is this which especially engages us at this time. This ought to enable us to come to a clear conception of the relation we sustain to the impending era of wrath. The Unveiling should throw light on Thessalonians and vice versa. Their joint testimony will keep us from incorrect conclusions.

In the Unveiling the great affliction is especially directed against the various classes in *Israel* — the male son, the sun-clothed woman, and the rest of her seed. In Thessalonians all is concerned with the *nations*, or gentiles. They turned to God from idols. No Israelite could do this, for, since the return from the captivity, they have not worshiped idols. If it referred to them, moreover, it would have been *returned*, not turned. Such a statement is especially inapplicable to Israel at the time of the end, for they suffer because they will not serve an idol. Should they worship the image, no return to God is possible, then. The Thessalonians "waited" for God's Son (1 Thes. 1:10). This is a special word, often used of waiting a full term, without any intervening incident. With Israel it is either *watch* or *endure*, for there will be many indications and much suffering preceding His advent as the Son of Mankind.

We must remember that the coming of Israel's Messiah was hovering over the nation throughout the period of the book of Acts. It was to be preceded by the opening judgments of the day of the Lord. It would be a matter of immediate moment to the Thessalonians to

know what would become of them in that great crisis. They had so much trial that they, like many other saints since their day, could not help thinking that God was acting in judgment, and, therefore, that the day of indignation had come. To relieve them of this fear Paul was given a special revelation, "by the word of the Lord". This is of extraordinary interest to us, now that we have seen how the saints of Israel will be dealt with. The male son will be divinely sheltered on mount Zion. The woman will be sustained in the wilderness. The rest will be left to bear the infliction. What becomes of believers among the nations?

Believing gentiles and Jews, under Paul's ministry, will not come under any of these classes. They have no covenant claims. They do not *deserve* aught. They are treated after the pattern of Paul's conversion. *Grace* steps in. God did not appoint them to indignation but to the procuring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, that, whether watching or drowsing, they should live together with Him (1 Thes. 5:9, 10). They have a future salvation, as well as a past and a present one. This fends them from future wrath. And where will they be? Sheltered on mount Zion, or safe in the wilderness, watching for His advent? No! They will be caught up into the air, to meet the Lord *Himself* and be with *Him* there.

But such grace is not easy to entertain, even by saints who have much more light than was vouchsafed to the Thessalonians at that early day. Continued persecutions and afflictions dimmed their eyes. An epistle purporting to come from Paul shook their minds and alarmed them, for it insisted that the day of the Lord was already present (2 Thes. 2:2). In order to correct this delusion the apostle brings in the apostasy and the wild beast of the Unveiling, whom he terms the "man of lawlessness". He shows that the time of trouble which they supposed was present would not come until this lawless one was on the

scene (Mat. 24:15). He protests that it could not come so long as they themselves restrained the operation of lawlessness.

The reading “day of *Christ*” (2 Thes. 2:2) seems to have led to much misconception of the meaning of this epistle. Perhaps no passage has been used more powerfully against the thought of Christ’s imminent advent. The phrase should be “the day of the *Lord*”. There seems to be practically no authority of any weight for the other reading. It does not occur in any of the three most ancient manuscripts. It is not the true reading.

But there is no reason for taking the *day* to refer to the coming of the Lord. This was given to them as a blessed hope. This was specially imparted to be a *comfort* to them in their trials and bereavements. It would not shake their minds or alarm them. Rather, they would welcome it with delight. In fact, the apostle appeals to their assembling with Him (2 Thes. 2:1) to prove that the day was *not* present.

The Thessalonians, however, were not perturbed by the thought of its *imminence*, but were alarmed by a sense of its *presence*. I believe that the day of the Lord is imminent now, yet it does not alarm me in the least. It gives me joy and the assurance that the coming of Christ is still more imminent. There is much to indicate that the apostasy and the unveiling of the man of lawlessness cannot be long delayed. But God prefers us for salvation (2 Thes. 2:13). His indignation cannot be poured out until we are out of the way.

We need not, therefore, be concerned because there is no provision made for the safety of the believers among the nations in this part of the Apocalypse. The faithful in Israel are sheltered from the wild beasts by divine interposition. They are kept in safety on the earth, which they are destined to rule as the bride of the Lamb-kin. But the body of Christ, in accordance with its celestial destiny, in harmony with the transcendent grace

which it receives and which it will display among the celestials, is transported far above the reach of the wild beasts. Not on mount Zion or in the wilderness do they find refuge from the fearful infliction, but in the very presence of Christ Himself, above the dark storm clouds that cover the earth. Truly, we are not only saved *by* grace, but *for* grace! Israel's sorest trial will find us bathed in ineffable bliss.

THE UNVEILING OF THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS

There is an unveiling within this Unveiling. Not only is Christ unveiled throughout, but His false counterfeit is revealed under the figure of the wild beast. Just as Christ is known by various names and titles, corresponding to His offices and relations, so this superman is spoken of in a variety of ways. Paul calls him "the man of lawlessness". Codex Alexandrinus reads "the man of *sin*", which is followed in the Authorized Version (2 Thes. 2:3). The apostle John calls him the Antichrist (1 John 2:18) in his epistles. Both of these have particular reference to the religious side of his unveiling. Too often they are used only of the political aspect, such as is suggested by the king or prince of Daniel.

Paul describes the man of lawlessness, not as the great despot of the end time, not as the head of earthly dominion, but as the object of universal adoration, who opposes all other worship, who elevates himself above every other object of veneration, who sits in the temple of God, who demonstrates that he is God (2 Thes. 2:4).

The unveiling of Christ is accomplished by power and is accompanied by signs and miracles. So also will be the unveiling of the lawless one. Satan will supply him with power and signs, and especial stress will be laid on the miraculous display which humanity craves. These are wrought by the second wild beast, who will be the spokesman or prophet of the first.

There may be many marvelous miracles at the time

of the end which mankind will accept as divine credentials, but the awful deception of them lies in the fact that they are signs as well as miracles. God, for a time, lends His own power to the enemy. He enables the false prophet to do that which only a true prophet could accomplish in the past. In Elijah's day the prophets of Baal were defeated because they could not draw down fire from heaven. Elijah made this a test. "The God that answereth by fire, He is God!" The people answered, "Good is the word!" With such a precedent, only those who are forewarned can escape the conclusion that the second wild beast is a prophet of God, for he seems to do precisely what Elijah did (1 Kings 18:24). As a matter of fact both signs are deeply, yet differently significant. The fire of Elijah fell upon the altar and consumed the sacrifice. It stands for the wrath of God which consumed His Son on Golgotha.

The fire which comes down at the behest of the false prophet does not fall upon an altar. It consumes no sacrifice. It speaks of the wrath which is about to fall upon mankind itself because of their worship of the wild beast. In reality the second wild beast not only draws down fire from heaven, but brings upon mankind the raging fury of God's wrath, of which the fire is a sign, for he induces them to worship the image of the wild beast.

The second sign is the converse of the first. That speaks of the death of Christ, this is associated with His resurrection. Life has always been recognized as of God alone. Ignorant folk talk of horsehairs turning into worms, and scientists promise to produce life, but so far no life has ever been created except by the hand of God. The resurrection of the wild beast will produce a powerful impression, for, despite all the pretensions of science, no one can even bring back life that has left a dead body. But the vivifying of the image of the wild beast is far more wonderful in its way. The body of the wild beast

was that given him by God. It had all the organs necessary to carry on the vital processes. But the image will be an entirely human production. To impart a spirit to it is the most marvelous miracle, the most conclusive sign, that could be presented to mankind to prove the deity of the wild beast.

Life is the great essential in an image of the deity. Idols of stocks and stones, gold or silver, can only misrepresent the living God. Being made by man, not only do they caricature His form, but they fail to reflect any of the essentials of real deity, because they lack vitality and all that flows from it. The meanest worshiper at an idol's shrine is far nearer the divine image than the sacred statue which he adores, for he can think and speak and act and love. In a measure, mankind is made in God's image, hence He often speaks of Himself in terms of humanity. To endow an image with spirit, or life, is the most signal proof of deity which can be given. No mere man can do it. It is only possible through the help of God. The second wild beast will be given this power at the time of the end because it corresponds with God's own activities during that era. His life will be used to destroy. For a brief period He is like the image of the wild beast.

God's perfect Image, His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, not only had life, but imparted it to others. He became a vivifying Spirit. It is this which makes Him so like God that He conveyed to human perception precisely the impression which God would impart if our senses were capable of perceiving Him. Our eyes cannot behold the invisible God, but they can see His exact Counterpart when they gaze upon His Image. And this Image consists, not in His physical frame, but in His life. Life, abundant life, alone can lead us into acquaintance with the Author of life. Lack of life leads to lawlessness and sin. God is fully exhibited to human sight by Him Who raised the dead, Who, when He laid down

His life, had authority to take it again, and Who will ultimately impart unending life to all.

To give a spirit to the image of the wild beast (13: 15) is the equivalent of giving it life. In the original Scriptures, life is always associated with spirit. It is deplorable that the translators have so often confused it with soul. Life is not seated in the blood, as the versions affirm. It is the spirit that vivifies. As a result of the impartation of spirit the image talks. What it says is not on record. When the true Image spoke men marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. The words which He uttered were spirit and life. To Jairus' daughter "*Talitha coumi!*" came with vitalizing power. To the dead son of the widow of Nain, His "*Youth, I am saying to you, be roused!*" proved stronger than the bars of death. To Lazarus, not only dead, but decomposing, His summons, "*Come out hither!*" led him back to the land of the living.

To fully appreciate the contrast between the true Image and the false, we should allow our hearts to ponder the wealth of affection involved in each of these cases. Only those who have felt a father's fondness for his child can appreciate the joy of Jairus over the restoration of his daughter. Only those who know something of the place an only son would have in the heart of his widowed mother, especially in the East, can imagine the transports which his recall from death would bring. Lazarus was especially beloved. His death brought tears even to the eyes of the Saviour. What a change was wrought by his resurrection! Joy, too sweet and solemn for words, filled the hearts of the sisters. Martha makes Him a dinner. Mary takes precious attar and rubs His feet and wipes them with her hair. His words bring life, and the life brings love, and love brings adoration and worship.

What a contrast is Satan's means of making worshippers! The image imparts no life. It does not implant joy

in any heart. It inspires fear, for all who will not worship it are doomed. It has the power to kill all who refuse to do homage. It does not need a vivid imagination to picture the awful scenes which follow the setting up of this image. Daniel calls it the desolating detestation (Mat. 24:15). Many a father will be bereaved of his child. Many a widow will mourn her only son. Many a family will be desolated by the loss of a beloved member. Oh, the distress and despair, the weeping and the wailing, the moaning and the anguish which will follow the advent of the image of the wild beast!

THE "MARK" OF THE WILD BEAST

Satan's gospel is not for "whosoever will", but for *all*, whether they will or not. All *must* worship the image or die. Their allegiance must be public, open to the eyes of everyone. No one will be allowed to evade it. All classes and conditions must wear the badge of the wild beast. That this is more than a mere "mark" is evident from the way in which it is rendered in Acts 17:29, the only other occurrence. There it is translated *graven*, and evidently refers to the *sculptures* of pagan deities. The Greek word is *charagma*. In the form *charactér* it is rendered *express image* in Hebrews 1:3. Our word *character* is directly derived from it, and still conveys the sense of the Greek word in its form *characteristic*. The "mark" will be a symbolic design, an emblem. Not only do nations have their flags and seals, and societies their badges and pins, but commercial commodities have their trade marks, also.

The "mark" of the beast is not a new idea, but the final development of a very old one. Even religious societies have taken to this scheme. Their members usually wear a pin with some suggestive emblem, as a cross or a crown, or the initial letters of the name of their organization. The "mark" of the wild beast, however, seems to be of a more permanent character. It is put on

their right hands or on their foreheads, probably branded or indelibly tattooed in the skin. It seems that there is a choice between three things, the emblem, the name of the wild beast, or the number of its name. One of these must be present. Its absence will lead to suspicion, detection and death. No one will be able to buy or sell without the brand of the wild beast. To attempt to do so will doubtless be fatal.

Society, as at present constituted, is based on the exchange of commodities or service. Except among the most primitive peoples, no one attempts to produce or manufacture all that he needs, or even a small portion. He specializes in one line, exchanges his services or product for money, and with this he buys the great variety of necessities and luxuries demanded by modern civilization. Whether the advantages of this system are as great as its disadvantages we will not stop to discuss. Certain it is, however, that it will be a terrible handicap to anyone who does not wish to worship the wild beast. He cannot sell and cannot buy. His only possible hope would be a complete severance from human society and escape to some distant region cut off from the rest of the world. There he would need to struggle for his existence with his bare hands.

Of the three different "marks", the emblem, the name, and the number, only one is made known. We can only guess that the emblem will be symbolic of worldwide worship. We do not know the name of the wild beast, but we are told that it corresponds to a certain number. This number is revealed. It is six hundred sixty-six.

The translation "it is the number of a man" tells us nothing new, unless it be that the wild beast is human. The Greek word *anthrōpos* is used, not only for a single human, but for mankind as a whole. The precise form used here, the genitive singular, occurs often in the title Son of Man, or, as the Concordant Version has it, Son

of Mankind. He was not the Son of *a* human being merely, though that is true in relation to His mother, but He is the Son of all Humanity. The number 666 is the number of a man because that man's name is appropriate to his position as the head of humanity. In him are concentrated all the attainments of man in alienation from God. He is the flower of the race, the highest ideal to which man can attain in sin. It is most fitting that the number of his name should correspond with the number of mankind.

There can be no question that numbers are significant. This is especially true in the Scriptures, where they are used with precision and intelligence. In Hebrew the number seven comes from a root meaning *satisfy*, and this thought may be easily discerned in most instances where it is used. This is most striking in the Unveiling, where we find it on every hand, because of the thorough and satisfactory manner of God's judgments. There are seven ecclesias, seven lampstands, seven stars, seven spirits, seven torches, seven seals, seven horns, seven eyes, seven messengers, seven trumpets, seven thunders, seven heads, seven diadems, seven bowls, seven calamities, etc. Like the seven days of a week, these speak of a full cycle and satisfactory accomplishment.

Six is one short of seven, hence suggests a falling short of satisfaction. This, as we all know, characterizes all that man does. He was given six days to do all his work. But it is altogether vanity. His strenuous efforts accomplish nothing worth while. Typically, the wild beast comes on the scene at the end of the sixth day. The ensuing millennial era is in the seventh or sabbath. Hence he is the representative of the highest pinnacle of human achievement. Man has been working to uplift, to civilize, to educate, to perfect humanity, and we behold in the wild beast the finished product of his highest endeavors.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 14:1-5

14 And I perceived, and *lo!* the Lambkin standing on mount Zion, and with It a hundred forty-four thousand, having Its name and Its Father's name written on their foreheads. ²And I hear a sound out of heaven as the sound of many waters and as the sound of loud thunder, and the sound which I hear is as lyre singers playing on their lyres. ³And they are singing a new song in sight of the throne and in sight of the four animals and in sight of the elders. And no one was able to learn the song except the hundred forty-four thousand, who have been bought from the earth. ⁴These are they who were not polluted with women, for they are celibates. These are they who are following the Lambkin wherever It may be going. These are bought from mankind, a firstfruit to God and the Lambkin. ⁵And in their mouth falsehood was not found, for they are flawless.

THE ONE HUNDRED FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND AS WORSHIPERS

THE Melchisedec priesthood of Christ is the key to the millennial kingdom. He will be a Priest on His throne. The same is true of all the officers in His kingdom. Their powers will be twofold. They will not only rule over the nations but will also preside over their worship. And the nations will not only be subjects of the civil administration, but will be required to take part in the worship at the holy oblation at Jerusalem. It will be a sacerdotal despotism.

Penalties will be imposed on religious laxity. Zechariah tells us that "every one that is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem, a quota shall ascend year by year to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, and to celebrate the festival of booths. And it shall be, that the families of the earth who will not ascend to Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, on them shall be no downpour. And should the family of Egypt not ascend, and not come, that have none [i. e., as Egypt has no rain it would not affect them], on them shall be the stroke, wherewith Jehovah strikes the nations which do not ascend to celebrate the festival of booths. This shall be the sin of Egypt and the sin of all the nations which do not ascend to celebrate the festival of booths" (Zech. 14:16-19).

The hundred forty-four thousand have come before us in the political section of the Unveiling (7:2-8). There they are seen as the slaves of God who are pre-

served unscathed through the impending judgments because they have the seal of God on their foreheads (7: 3). If, as we have surmised, they are the special agents of the Messiah in the government of the nations, as the twelve apostles are of Israel, it is to be expected that they will reappear in this section of the Unveiling. Fitness for such a high position demands that they not only be sheltered from the political powers, but also escape, in a marked manner, the worship of the wild beast.

Hence the hundred forty-four thousand reappear in the religious section, immediately after the description of the worship of the wild beast and its image. There is, undoubtedly, an intended contrast between the purity of their worship and the prevailing idolatry.

Under the historical interpretation of this book, which spreads the judgment period over thousands of years, it would, of course, be necessary that this company should be distinct from the previous group of the same number. And this is true of many other items as well. If even one group of saints of exactly this number could be found in the annals of Christendom, the interpretation might challenge investigation. But even then there is the difficulty of assembling them on Mount Zion, which, I believe, no expositor attempts to do, for the Lambkin is with them there.

Few points in the exposition of the Apocalypse have been left so indefinite as the exact location and nature of the place here known as mount Zion. Indeed, it is highly probable that this passage is the source of the prevailing notion that it is only a figurative name for heaven. Perhaps the passage “. . . mount Zion, and the city of the living God, the celestial Jerusalem” (Heb. 12: 22) may have confirmed this idea. One of the very best and most independent expositions of this book makes this a “vision in heaven”, though the learned author would, undoubtedly, resent the inference that he was transferring the location of a part of Jerusalem to the

celestial regions. Another writer of more than usual ability tries to insist that, even if it is in heaven, it must be connected with the throne of David and the Jewish kings.

There is a real difficulty here which can only be solved by facing it rather than by forgetting its existence. The Lambkin and the hundred forty-four thousand are standing on mount Zion. But the sound of their singing is heard in heaven. They sing before the throne and before the four animals and before the elders. At first the conclusion seems inevitable that mount Zion must be in heaven. But further reflection tends to weaken and then reverse this deduction.

We must note that nothing is said to the effect that Zion and heaven are identical. It arises from a species of "reasoning", if we may dignify it with this name, which is all too prevalent in dealing with God's Word. Real reasoning demands two definite premises, but the saints are usually satisfied with one, and often prefer a prejudice in place of the major premise. If we had statements to this effect: (1) The hundred forty-four thousand stand on mount Zion. (2) At the same time they are singing in heaven. Then mount Zion must be in the celestial realms. But we are *not* assured that they are singing in heaven. There is a striking avoidance of any such statement. The *sound* of their singing is heard there, but that does not preclude their personal presence on earth.

In the language of these visions heaven hovers near the earth. When the door was opened in heaven John had no difficulty in hearing a trumpet calling him thither (4:1). There is no reason why the celestial choir should not furnish the accompaniment for the hundred forty-four thousand, even though their song should not be heard on earth. If there is rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner, surely this great company will rouse them to pæans of highest praise.

The object of the vision is to strike the opening chords of that great chorus of rejoicing which will accompany the inauguration of the kingdom. Some of the songs are given us in this book. We have already listened to the new song of the animals and the elders (5:9), and will yet hear the song of Moses, and the song of the Lambkin (15:3-4). At creation all the sons of God shouted for joy (Job 38:7). At the incarnation a multitude of the heavenly host herald the birth of Christ (Luke 2:13-14). So the regeneration will be celebrated with singing.

This vision of the hundred forty-four thousand is a striking and studied antithesis to the previous description of the worship of the wild beast. Always, even in the most flagrant of apostasies, God has had a remnant in reserve for Himself. So now He brings before us a company that worships *Him* when all the world seems to be worshipping the wild beast. The contrast seems as great as can be. In every particular the votaries of the antichrist are the opposites of devoted followers of Christ.

Instead of a monster more ferocious than the worst wild beast, our eyes rest on a Lambkin. Not merely a Lamb, though that is one of the most gentle and harmless of animals, but a little Lamb, weak and defenseless. It stands on mount Zion, the south-eastern spur of the hill on which Jerusalem is built. This is all the territory assigned to It, while the wild beast boasts of authority over every tribe and people and language and nation (13:7). The whole earth is subject to its decrees, and must bow before its manifesto. How small is the area of true worship!

Who will be able to count the myriads upon myriads of those who receive the emblem or the name or the number of the wild beast? No religion has yet been known upon the earth with so many adherents, and won in so short a time. There will be thousands for every

one who belongs to the Lambkin. A hundred forty-four thousand may seem a large number when compared with some ecclesiastical bodies, but it will sink into insignificance in contrast to the world-wide religious combination of the end time.

The previous mention of this company was almost solely occupied with their sealing in order to shelter them from God's impending judgment. The seal was placed on their foreheads (7:3), but no hint was given as to its character. Now we find that it was not an emblem, or a number, but two names. The name of the Lambkin and the name of Its Father are found on the foreheads of the hundred forty-four thousand. They are sheltered by the blood of the Lambkin. Their safety lies in the great Sacrifice. And their worship is in the name of the Father.

How marked is the contrast with those who follow the wild beast! The emblem, the name, and the number all glorify humanity and the great superman at its head, and, through him, honor the dragon, and the vast confederacy of evil arrayed against God and His Christ. They are a badge of rebellion, a sign of the very highest summit of apostasy of which mankind is capable, the ultimate of human departure from God. They mark the recipients as special objects of the divine fury (14:10), the furthest of all His creatures from His favor.

Those having the name of the Lambkin and Its Father's name on their foreheads certify to man's sinfulness and need of a Sacrifice, and confirm their allegiance to the Father, and this at a time when such a stand has cost many their very lives, and everything they hold dear on earth. Faithfulness to God at such a crisis demands that they receive a special reward in the kingdom. While their enemies will feel the effects of God's fury, they will enjoy the special marks of His favor. No company in the kingdom will have such a high place in the government of the nations as the hundred forty-

four thousand. In Israel the apostles will rule. They are twelve. But among the nations this company of twelve thousand times twelve will administer the government of the great King.

Morally, also, there is a vast contrast. Idolatry has always been associated with ethical declension. Immorality, condemned in the true worship of God, is often condoned in the false ritual of idols. Indeed, the grossest of sins have often been the most attractive features of the false worship at their shrines. The statement that the hundred forty-four thousand were not polluted with women throws a lurid light on the character of worship accorded the wild beast and its image. There can be little doubt that it will be accompanied with the utmost sensuality and most flagrant immorality. Set opposite to this are these celibates, whose moral purity will appear as a chaste snowflake upon the black shroud of iniquity.

Many will question the possibility of the world sinking to such moral degradation. But it is in obedience to a law which cannot work otherwise. The farthest limit of apostasy from God must be followed by the greatest degradation of humanity. After the apostle describes the general defection of mankind (Rom. 1:18-23), he forthwith adds, "Wherefore God gives them up . . . to the uncleanness of dishonoring their bodies among themselves, who alter the truth of God into the lie . . . and offer divine service to the creature . . ." At the time when "the lie" has its fullest development then also will mankind be given up to such sensual excesses as could not be countenanced on any other occasion.

We need not point to such examples as the French revolution to prove that righteousness retires with reverence. It is all too obvious in our own day. How few are restrained by a wholesome fear of God! Morality is openly derided as merely a matter of expedience. Conscientious scruples are deemed Puritanical and old-fashioned. And this looseness is constantly increasing.

Instead of a reaction, there is a continual advance in the direction indicated in this portion of the Apocalypse. All that is needed is to sanctify sensuality with religion. Even this has had a beginning in the appeals to sight and sound and even to the stomach, which characterizes modern Christianity.

The saddest of all the consequences of receiving the emblem or name or number of the wild beast is the fact that all such are involved in the judgment which overtakes the beasts themselves. Instead of being saved from harm by the tokens on their foreheads or hands, these mark them for the direst doom of any of mankind except their two leaders. How different is the fate of the faithful! They follow the Lambkin (14:4). When threatened with persecution and death they stand true. And their reward is to accompany Christ, as the Lambkin, in spreading the blessing brought through His sacrifice. The dupes of the wild beast seek to save their souls, yet lose them: these lose them for Christ's sake and so save them for eonian life.

There may be a special antithesis in the use of the word "buy". Twice we are informed that they are bought (14:3-4), from the earth (or the land), and from mankind. This suggests the secret of their superior station. Their place in the hundred forty-four thousand is not paid for by their efforts. Rather they themselves are purchased by the precious blood of Christ. The wild beast may prohibit buying to all without his hallmark, but God laughs at his laws and comes down to earth and concludes one of the greatest commercial transactions ever consummated, in defiance of his threats.

Even the word "firstfruit" is full of suggestion. They are the first to actually enter into the sphere of God's kingdom on earth. With them as a beginning, it starts its triumphant career. The devotees of the wild beast are the reverse of this, for they are the last fruits of man's misrule. With them closes the harvest of

humanity's endeavors to rule the world in alienation from God.

A most sweeping reflection upon the character of the worshipers of the wild beast is implied in the statement concerning the hundred forty-four thousand, that "in their mouth falsehood was not found". This is the time of "the lie". The appearance of everything will be misleading. God Himself will send an operation of deception (2 Thes. 2:11) that they should believe the falsehood. Satan's emissaries will be clothed with divine credentials. There will be no truth. All will be false. But the hundred forty-four thousand are not deceived. They alone are flawless.

"In their mouth falsehood was not found." The world has already advanced to a point in the apostasy where these words condemn almost every phase of its activities. Its business, its social, even its religious life, is a web of pretense and hypocrisy and deception. Truth is offensive and forbidden. And all this is but in preparation for the great lie, when the wild beast will usurp the place of God and receive the honors which belong alone to Christ.

The most notable difference between the two classes we are considering, however, is suggested by the new song which ascends to the throne of God from the hearts of His hallowed worshipers. Rather would we expect the wild beast to be celebrated by a thousand songs, if he is indeed the God he claims to be. Should not all of earth's music be tuned to hymn the newly risen deity? Why are we not given some great poem composed in his honor and sung to strains of celestial music?

No other influence in all the world has overflowed in song like the joyous faith of Christ. It has inspired the most glorious melodies and the sweetest and most enduring songs. Its hymns transcend all others. Even in this wicked eon the praise of God or the blessing of His saints finds more expression in exultant song than all

the other emotions of mankind. None of the religions of the world have a sacred repertoire to compare with ours, either in number, variety or elevation of thought. Our joy must overflow. Our praise must find utterance.

The religion of the wild beast is joyless. It has no song. But the hundred forty-four thousand are the firstfruit of that new era which shall be filled with melody and overflow with music. In that millennial kingdom most of the psalms will find their fulfillment and fullest use. It will be a day of exultant joy. How fitting that this company, in inaugurating that blessed time, should do so in musical measures whose vibrations swell until they reach the very court of heaven!

The song begins in heaven. It is sung before the throne and before the animals and before the elders to the accompaniment of harps or lyres. Unlike all the other songs in the Unveiling, we are not given the words. But from these songs, and from the fact that this is a new song, learned only by this special company, we surmise that it celebrates their blessings and honors in the kingdom, giving the praise for their deliverance and dignities to the Lambkin.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 14:6-13

⁶And I perceived another messenger flying in mid-heaven, having an eonian evangel to preach over those situated on the earth, and over every nation and tribe and language and people, ⁷saying with a loud voice, "*Fear ye God and be giving glory to Him, seeing that the hour of His judgment came; and worship the Maker of heaven and the land and the sea and springs of water.*"

⁸And another, a second messenger follows, saying, "*It falls! It falls! Babylon the great has made all nations drink of the furious wine of her prostitution!*"

⁹And another, a third messenger, follows them, saying with a loud voice, "*If anyone is worshiping the wild beast and its image, and is getting the emblem on his forehead or on his hand,* ¹⁰*he, also, is drinking of the wine of God's fury, which has been blended undiluted in the cup of His indignation, and he will be tormented in fire and sulphur before the holy messengers and before the Lambkin.* ¹¹*And the fumes of their torment are ascending for the eons of the eons. And they are having no rest day and night—those worshiping the wild beast and its image, and if anyone is getting the emblem of its name.* ¹²*Here is the endurance of the saints, who are keeping the precepts of God and the faith of Jesus.*"

¹³And I hear a voice out of heaven, saying, "Write: 'Happy are the dead who are dying in the Lord henceforth! 'Yea,' the spirit is saying, 'that they will be resting from their toil, for their acts are accompanying them.''"

THE EONIAN EVANGEL

THE religious deliverance of Israel is the subject of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters of the Unveiling. The star-crowned woman and her male son are safe. The hundred forty-four thousand are protected. What about "the rest of her seed, who are keeping the precepts of God and who have the testimony of Jesus" (12:17)? These are scattered in the land and among the nations. It is to these especially that the eonian evangel is directed (14:7). These are warned of the fall of Babylon (14:8). These are threatened with torment if they worship the wild beast (14:9). Of these are the martyrs of that day (14:13). Such are in view in the Harvest (14:15, 16) and the Vintage (14:17-20).

It is of prime importance to perceive that all of this occurs at the conclusion of the present eon. It cannot be "applied" to any other period in the history of mankind. The eonian evangel goes forth for only a very brief period, Babylon's final fall will be sudden, the worship of the wild beast will not exceed half a heptad of years. The figures of the Harvest and the Vintage are suggestive of a brief era at the close of the year.

But there seem to be other limitations besides those of time. It seems to be primarily addressed to the saints in Israel who have not been included in the groups already described. This becomes more apparent when we compare what is said of Babylon with the next section. There we find that some of God's people are in the doomed city. A voice out of heaven calls to them, saying,

“Come out of her, My people, lest you should be participating in her sins, and lest you should be getting her calamities . . .” (Un. 18:4). Hence, in this section, a messenger warns of Babylon’s fall. As there is no object except to save the saints in the city, who are Israelites, this announcement must be for them, and has no bearing on the gentiles. Hence this whole section is to be applied to the seed of Jacob.

In the previous part of this Apocalypse, after the hundred forty-four thousand had been sealed, we are introduced to a vast throng, or “great multitude”, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and languages, who come out of the great affliction (7: 9-17). If the hundred forty-four thousand come before us again in this section, why not the vast throng? The conviction grows with consideration that the angelic ministry of the fourteenth chapter of this scroll is not intended for mankind as a whole, but for the saints of Israel outside the holy city in the land and among the nations.

At first sight this thought does not seem to be borne out by the text, for the eonian evangel is to be sent to those situated on the earth and to every nation and tribe and language and people (14:6). The terms are redundant, for “the earth” includes all the territory indicated by the following phrases. When we remember that “earth” frequently is limited to the *land* of Israel, and that they are specially before us here, we are strongly inclined to make it “those situated on the *land*”. Moreover, the literal rendering, “ON every nation,” etc., is difficult to render into English idiomatically, and probably means simply that this evangel is proclaimed *over*, rather than *to* every nation and tribe and language and people, for the holy seed are dispersed among them all.

To the mass of mankind, the worship of the wild beast will be a matter of course. They do not fear him. They will be eager to have his emblem or his name or his num-

ber. But it will be a most fearful trial for the pious Jew. He probably makes his living by buying and selling. Now he cannot carry on any trading without disavowing Jehovah. To him comes the eonian evangel: "*Fear ye God, and be giving glory to Him, seeing that the hour of His judgment came; and worship the Maker of heaven and the land and the sea and springs of water.*"

It is an evangel of *fear*. It is the most primitive and basic of all evangels, peculiarly appropriate to the dispensation of divine indignation, and in keeping with the time of judgment. It involves faith, for those who do not recognize God at all cannot fear Him. But the faith is of the most elemental nature. There is no realization of God's love or grace, but only of His power. He is not the Father, but the Maker of the physical world and the Judge of mankind. Such a God is to be feared and worshiped. Those who will neither fear nor worship Him are doomed; those who do will be delivered, though it be through death.

The terms of this evangel throw a flood of light, not only on the religion of the end time, but also on the present trend of religious thought, especially in connection with creation. The apostle Peter gives us the latter-day apostate Jew's attitude toward God and His universe: "All is continuing thus from the beginning of creation" (2 Pet. 3:4). And this is just what so-called scientists and modern religionists are trying to impress upon us today. The form of the eonian evangel indicates that they will succeed in their efforts to eliminate the Maker of the universe from the minds of men and banish the Judge from the thoughts of His creatures.

Modern theoretical science is principally occupied in postulating (what it cannot prove) that all nature is continuing and will continue as it has always continued in the past, without any disturbance from without. It seeks to explain all phenomena by means of forces now operating. There is even a pathetic attempt at reducing

creation to a fortuitous concourse of atoms. All must be reduced to law. But there must be no Lawgiver! Its creed can be condensed into one word, *uniformity*. The theory has been called *uniformitarianism*.

As Peter declares (2 Pet. 3:5), they want to be oblivious of the testimony of divine revelation as to the great cataclysms which have rent this earth in former eons, lest such occurrences should indicate divine interposition, not only in the past, but in the future also. More than this, they actually shut their eyes to the plainest evidences of cataclysmic forces in nature, and seek to explain them by the slow processes of the present. This is why they want so many millions of years for their cosmology.

When an astronomer views the heavens he is awed by the order which pervades the starry spheres. But in the midst of this regularity there are signs of discord. Instead of a planet between Mars and Jupiter, he finds its fragments, commonly called the asteroids, but better named the planetoids. Some tremendous cataclysm has occurred, which broke the planet into innumerable parts. No one dreams that this was the result of a slow evolution, requiring millions of years. It undoubtedly was a sudden catastrophe, a "disruption" so tremendous that it shattered the planet into thousands of pieces.

Similar symptoms appear everywhere. Moons out of the plane of their planet's rotation, some actually revolving in an opposite direction, planets tilted at various angles to their orbits, tremendous comets, or wandering stars, rushing into the solar system out of the voids of space and threatening all with destruction—these are only some of the evidences of cataclysmic action in the past which logically require a similar future repetition.

Geology, or the science of the earth's surface, is the least scientific of all the "ologies". It is founded on the absurd theory that the earth is like a ball which has received many coats of paint of various colors, one upon

the other, over its whole surface, and it bases its various ages on the fossils found in these different strata. It would have us believe that first the earth was entirely covered with the Archæan rocks. Then it was entirely enveloped with another coat, and so on, until now.

Theoretically all of these different layers should be present everywhere. As a matter of fact, they are not all present anywhere. Theoretically, they should always be arranged in the standard order. As a matter of fact they seldom are found in the "proper" order. As a result, geology is largely occupied in trying to explain why nature is such a poor geologist. There are "intrusions" here, and "overthrusts" there, and anomalies everywhere. Geology is still in the backward stage where men try to fasten their theories on nature instead of forming them from the phenomena of nature.

No one, not inoculated with the virus of theoretical geology, who views the tremendous faults and fissures, the stupendous mountains and chasms, which abound upon the earth's surface, can escape the conclusion that the earth's crust has been through at least one upheaval such as has not occurred since mankind has been on it. The strata or layers no longer lie horizontally, as they evidently once did, but are piled up at every conceivable angle and in the utmost confusion.

A real reader of the rocks cannot but believe that the earth has been through some shuddering experience which has shattered its surface far more than is evident at the present time, for the action of wind and water has covered and concealed much of its broken nakedness. Some ascribe all of this to the deluge of Noah's day. But much of it is probably due to that great disruption which is recorded at the forefront of revelation. It was not created as it is. The earth *became* waste and sterile (Gen. 1:2). The theory that some external force caused this by tilting the earth's axis seems the most likely.

But, some would say, what has this to do with the

Bible? What is the bearing of all this on the eonian evangel? Very much, indeed. Science *should* lead to the adoration of "the Maker of heaven and the land and the sea and springs of water". It should confirm the eonian evangel. It should insist on His invisible hand, not only in the ordinary and orderly processes of nature, but in the awful cataclysms which have disturbed its history. But today we see it chiefly concerned in obliterating His footprints by futile theories and seeking to bring God's revelation into disrepute because it does not conform to the false philosophy of this same science.

As a result of this onslaught the religion of the end time will deny that there is any Maker or that He will take a personal interest in the affairs of mankind so as to execute judgment. To fear God and give glory to Him in these two characters would not be sufficient to save anyone now. But then this will be all that is required. In every administration God is known according to the special attitude He takes. Now it is grace. Then it will be judgment. Maker and Judge are the divine assumptions of that dread day. The evangel can rise no higher.

But why should this be called an *eonian* evangel? It receives this name because it is true throughout the eons. In the very beginning we have it enacted by Adam and Eve in the garden. They knew Him as Maker and Judge. Therefore, they feared and hid themselves. Under the circumstances the fear was right. It was based on a knowledge of God, however limited. At all times in the presence of sin, there should be reverential fear.

The presence of judgment calls for the eonian evangel. Noah feared God and escaped in the ark by going through the deluge. Under the law, the fear of Jehovah was the beginning of wisdom. Even our own evangel of the unadulterated grace of God is built on a wholesome fear of God's righteous judgment, as detailed in the beginning of the Roman epistle. And its very highest phase consists in carrying out our salvation with fear

and trembling. Even those who love Him and revel in His grace fear to do that which would displease Him.

We cannot call Paul's evangel eonian because it is too high for all but a part of one eon. We can call the judgment evangel eonian because it is low enough for all times. It is the elemental message, the substratum on which higher conceptions of God must rest, and loftier evangels must repose.

But, lest anyone should suppose that we would have it preached today, let us point out that it is an evangel without Christ, without blood, without redemption. There is not a single promise included in it. It is the most primitive appeal possible, based almost entirely on the evidence of nature. The manner of its proclamation will be miraculous, for a messenger will fly over the nations to make it known. No man is commissioned with its message. This leaves hardly any place for faith. It is at the foot of the spiritual scale, while our evangel is at the top.

THE FALL OF BABYLON

The brevity of this notice of Babylon's fall (14:8) is in notable contrast to the extended description in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters. The reason seems clear. This section deals with the faithful in Israel. Jehovah is carrying out His covenant with them. Babylon, however, is composed mostly of apostates, whose judgment comes before us in the next section, in which the unfaithful Israelites are judged by the law. All Jews of that day will be intensely interested in the fate of Babylon, for its influence will extend to all nations, who are all drunk with the wine she offers them. Her conduct is the cause of much of the persecution of the faithful in Israel. Her fall will be a great relief.

The third messenger's message is one of the most awful threats of doom to be found even in this dread book. It is terrible enough as it stands, yet it has been infinitely exaggerated by over-zealous but crude interpre-

tations. After being diverted from its context and its time periods discordantly translated, it presents insurmountable difficulties, not merely to the unbeliever and critic, but to the faith of the devout student. Even faith is not magic enough to get us to believe two contradictory statements. That is credulity. Faith is not a credulous half-wit, but a keen, intelligent, discriminating, believing.

The first problem that impresses us is the implication (apart from the context) that all who worship the wild beast will be tormented for the eons of the eons (14: 9-11). Elsewhere (in another context) we are told that the image causes that all who will not worship the wild beast may be killed (13: 15). If all who do not worship are killed by the image and all who do are tormented for the eons of the eons, who, then, will be left for the millennial kingdom? Whence are the nations who will stand before the Son of Mankind, as foretold by our Lord (Mat. 25: 31-46)? They are not judged according to this standard, but by their treatment of the Israelites among them in the time of their distress.

It is evident that we must not take these passages apart from their context and the section of the book in which they stand. The efforts of the wild beast and the image are directed against all mankind, but this paragraph closes with the significant sentence, "Here is the endurance of the *saints*, who are keeping the precepts of God and the faith of Jesus." That the disciples of the Circumcision can and did apostatize in the past is clearly evident from the warnings against it, especially in the Hebrew epistle, and here will be a sorer trial.

In writing to the Hebrews the writer reminds them of the pitiless provisions of the law, should any repudiate it. Nothing less than the death penalty was meted out to such. "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be counted worthy who tramples on the Son of God, and deems the blood of the covenant by which he is hallowed common, and outrages the spirit of grace? For

we are acquainted with Him Who is saying, ‘“Vengeance is Mine. I shall retaliate!”’ the Lord is saying’, and again, ‘The Lord will be judging His people.’ It is fearful to be falling into the hands of the living God!’ (Heb. 10:29-31). He who has law is judged far more severely than he who has none. He who has light shall receive a greater punishment than he who sins in darkness.

Babylon is charged with the blood of the prophets and of the saints and of all who have been slain on the earth (18:24). Many have inferred that she actually committed these crimes. Hence she was in existence from the time of Cain and is identified with every bloodthirsty persecutor of the saints, especially the Roman Catholic hierarchy. But it is not said that she actually did these deeds. Our Lord told the men of His generation that all the righteous blood shed upon the earth should come upon them (Mat. 23:35), from the blood of Abel down. Of course they had no hand in all these murders, but their murder of Messiah made it clear that they merely lacked the opportunity. They would have done all these villainies if they could. They will be charged with them.

So in the time of the end. Not all mankind will be threatened with the awful doom of eonian torment. That is for the enlightened Israelite who breaks the first and greatest of the commandments. As we have seen, the eonian evangel is for them, scattered among the nations, rather than for the nations themselves. So also the wine of God’s fury, the cup of His indignation, is for them if they fall aside. They crucify the Son of God again and hold Him up to infamy (Heb. 6:6). This not only solves the difficulty but puts the judgment on an intelligent and reasonable basis. To judge all mankind alike, even at such a time, would be inexcusable. This, the most awful sentence ever pronounced, is limited to the commission of the greatest sin by the most enlightened at the time of earth’s direst doom.

Torment is generally supposed to be the eternal and

exclusive lot of all unbelievers. Yet the twelve apostles were *tormented* (Mark 6:48) in rowing on the stormy lake. Lot tormented his *just* soul by dwelling in Sodom (2 Pet. 2:8). The star-crowned woman, who certainly does not represent the ungodly, is tormented in her travail (12:2). Very few of the saints escape torment entirely. Their torment, however, is not directly from God, in judgment, such as that which is now before us.

Even among unbelievers the scope of torment varies. Some may escape it entirely. Some suffer torment from physical disease (Mat. 4:24; 8:6). Others were tormented by legal procedure (Mat. 18:34). These were not divine visitations, but providential or human. It is really remarkable how seldom God is given this rôle in the Scriptures, compared with the frequency with which He is associated with it in the preaching of the gospel. In the Scriptures *torment is never united to any gospel but the eonian evangel*, in this passage.

The length of torment varies greatly, even when inflicted by God. It is always limited in its scope. Those of mankind living at the time of the end who do not have God's seal on their foreheads will be tormented *five months* when the fifth messenger trumpets (9:5). The locust horde inflicts pain like the sting of a scorpion, so that men will seek death rather than bear it, but they will not be allowed to die. This woe, as it is well named, passes away, as all of God's inflictions must do when their object is accomplished.

When, however, we come to deal with the wild beast and the false prophet, torment is extended to its very limit. It lasts for the eons of the eons, beyond which it cannot go. This is not only Scriptural but sensible. To mete out eternal torment to everyone, and especially to those who had little light, is so repugnant to our innate sense of justice that it casts discredit on the Book which is erroneously supposed to teach it. It is impossible to limit the amount of eternal torment. It cannot be ad-

justed to fit degrees of guilt. It is unscriptural, irrational, atrocious.

The *torment* of these Israelites does not last so long, but its *smoke*, or *fumes*, ascend for the eons of the eons. Of course, this must be a figure of speech, for torment has no smoke. We must not confuse this as though it read, the smoke *of the fire* of their torment, for that would be literal. It is very evident that the torment is not only by means of fire, but is *like* a fire in another respect, but *not like its flames* but its *fumes* or its *smoke*. The only way to understand the figure is to examine the literal carefully, and stress only the point of contact suggested by the word smoke.

A fierce fire need not smoke. If combustion is perfect the smoke itself is consumed, for it consists of small, heated, unburned particles. A poor fire does little else but smoke. Almost any fire, however, unless continually kindled, though it may burn brightly for a time, will die down and smoulder for a long period. I have known fires in sheltered corners to burn furiously for a while and then smoke for days. There are coal beds which have smouldered for centuries. This is the picture which is suggested by "the smoke of their torment". If we replace "torment" by its literal equivalent, we see a fire which, though hot at first, dies down and smoulders for the eons of the eons. Such will be the torment of the Israelitish worshipers of the wild beast.

The means of torment varies much. The most common is the accompaniment of disease (Mat. 4:24; 8:6), as some acute physical distress. The disciples suffered from the torment of overexertion and anxiety (Mark 6:48). Lot tormented his soul (2 Pet. 2:8). The torment of inquisitors was mostly by mechanical means. The body was racked in various ways which were insupportable (Mat. 18:34). We are not told how the two witnesses will torment their enemies (11:10). The birth of the male son will mean torment for the faithful in the

Israel of that day (12:2). The locusts torment mankind five months with the scorpion's sting (9:5). Babylon is tormented in her destruction (18:7, 10, 15). The Israelitish worshipers of the image will be tormented in fire and sulphur (14:10). The wild beasts and the Slanderer will suffer a similar but even severer fate (20:10). The means is literal.

How utterly astray is the popular teaching on torment! It associates it with the unbelieving mass of mankind, which God *never* does. By torturing the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the torment, there ascribed to hades, which is before the judgment, is transferred to the lake of fire, and all, no matter how poor they are, are given the rich man's deserts! Torment is suffered by various saints. Who preaches this? *It is never threatened as the penalty of sin*, except in the case of those who hear the eonian evangel. It is reserved for the most heinous crime on the part of the most enlightened. It is only for those who have apostatized from the worship of Jehovah.

Those who worship the beast doubtless do so under the pressure of the times, in order to get present relief from insupportable afflictions and save their souls from torture and death. In this they will be disappointed. They are having no rest, day or night, while worshiping the wild beast. The tense indicates that this is not a part of their future torment, but their present experience. This lack of tranquillity may be partly caused by an accusing conscience. Yet such will be the turmoil of the times, and such the severity of the judgments, that rest will be rare for anyone, even if they are not ground between the upper mill stone of God's indignation and the lower one of man's mad mandates.

In contrast with those who apostatize, and find no rest, are those who are faithful, who find it in death (14:13). The eonian evangel held out no promise. It spoke of no happiness. A voice out of heaven, however, supplements it with the evangel of death, "Happy are

the dead who are dying in the Lord henceforth!" How weighty are these words! How fully they fit the needs of those who hear them! Apply them elsewhere and they lose their point and pathos. There will be no escape for those not specially protected. Many true to Him must pay for it with their lives. Right thankful may they be that they are not like those under the fifth trumpet (9:6), who sought death but could not find it. Death will seek them and they will welcome it, for it is the only door of deliverance.

If we consider the experience of the apostate and contrast it with that of the martyr, we can easily see the force of this benediction. The apostate worships the wild beast, but gets no rest day or night. Later, when the Lord comes, he is tormented for his apostasy. The faithful worshiper of Jehovah, however, is beheaded (20:4). He suffers no more. Consciously, the moment of his death is the instant of his resurrection. It ushers him into the joys of the kingdom. There his bliss will be greatly enhanced because of his martyrdom. He will be resting from his toil and his acts will accompany him. He will live and reign with Christ the thousand years. So far as experience goes, death will be far preferable to life. Happy are the dead who die then in the Lord!

I well remember how, in the early years of my study of the Scriptures, the alluring phrase "the everlasting gospel" struck my fancy. But the contents of this evangel were an enigma to me. I could see that all other evangels were limited in time. But was *fear* to be the brightest gem in the eternal diadem? Was the worship of God as their Maker to be the highest reach of His creatures? What place was there in this for Christ and His redemption, for the Son of God and His reconciliation? Then I discovered that it was not "everlasting". It is eonian. Sin is in the eons, and fear is present only in them. Beyond, all enemies are gone and peace prevails. It is not an "everlasting" but an *eonian* evangel.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 14:14-20

¹⁴And I perceived, and lo! a white cloud, and on the cloud One sitting like a son of mankind, having a golden wreath on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand. ¹⁵And another messenger came out of the temple crying with a loud voice to Him Who is sitting on the cloud, "*Thrust in Thy sickle and reap! for the hour came to reap, for the harvest of the earth is dried.*" ¹⁶And He Who is sitting on the cloud cast His sickle on the earth and the earth is reaped.

¹⁷And another messenger came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. ¹⁸And another messenger came out of the altar, having jurisdiction over the fire, and he shouts with a loud voice to him who has the sharp sickle, saying: "*Thrust in your sharp sickle and pick the clusters of the earth's grapevine, for its grapes are dead ripe.*" ¹⁹And the messenger cast his sickle into the earth, and picks the grapevine of the earth, and he casts them into the great trough of the fury of God. ²⁰And the trough was trodden outside the city, and blood came out of the trough up to the horses' bits, from a thousand six hundred stadia [183.86 miles].

THE HARVEST AND THE VINTAGE

THE two divisions of this Temple section of the Unveiling, one giving us Jehovah's deliverance of faithful Israel, and the other detailing His destruction of the apostates, both close with a pair of pictures most graphically presenting their consummation. One concludes with the Harvest and the Vintage (14:14-20). The other ends with the Marriage Feast of the Lambkin and God's Great Dinner (19:6-21). In each case there is a couple of closely related figures. The first pair portrays the ingathering of the crops. There is a harvest of the grain and of the grapes. The other deals with feasting. There is a wedding and a state dinner. And in each case the first figure is filled with felicity and the second is dire with doom.

Until we see this it is somewhat difficult to discover why two figures so nearly alike should be used. If the Harvest also spells the destruction of Israel's adversaries, in what way does this differ from the Vintage? In every other way they seem identical, and we have something too near a "vain repetition" to claim a place in a scroll which otherwise has not a redundant syllable. There must be a wide divergence, similar to other cases of this kind. The two white horse riders (6:2; 19:11) have been confused, though one is Christ and the other antichrist. There is a surface likeness between good and evil, especially in the last days.

It is said that the Harvest must be a "judgment" scene because One like a son of mankind does the reap-

ing, and all "judgment" has been committed to the Son because He is a Son of Mankind (John 5:27). This is true, but the drab color foisted on the word "judgment" makes it false. This whole scroll is replete with judgment. Not merely the ungodly are judged, however, but the martyrs have *judgment* granted them (20:4). These martyrs are the very ones in view in this Harvest. The judgment of the dead (11:18) includes the wedding of the Lambkin. Her bridal robe is an award of judgment. "Judgment" is not condemnation. It deals out blessing to the deserving as well as doom to the undeserving. Jehovah Himself is judged at this time.

In this case, however, the sharp sickle *seems* to indicate a painful process. It is the very same kind of instrument as is used in the Vintage, which, as we shall see, is an act of God's fury. This anomaly is readily explained when we recall the previous proclamations and the eonian evangel. There, blessing is not through life, but death. There is the shadow of apparent doom in the blessing of the Harvest. Like the literal garnering of grain, it consists in beheading, and it is not easy to see in this terrible ordeal the true happiness which it holds. Apart from the special companies, the vast throng of Israel's saved at the time of the end will be harvested by death. They are the happy dead who die in the Lord.

It is suggested that this Harvest is the concentrated expression of the calamities which occur under the bowls. Having once seen the distinct divisions of this book, no one will take the closing visions of one section as an introduction to the next, especially when the object of the two is totally different. We are still concerned with the covenant, and Jehovah's fulfillment of it for faithful Israel. The next section, in which the bowls occur, deals with the unfaithful part of the nation, and their destruction. It does not commence until the law is exposed in the tabernacle of the testimony (15:5), for it is based on the breaking of the law. The Harvest is

founded on the fulfillment of the covenant (11:19).

There is something very striking and suggestive in the fact that the eonian evangel was proclaimed by a messenger, or angel, the doom of Babylon was announced by a messenger, the doom of the apostates was threatened by a messenger, the Vintage is carried out by two messengers, but a voice from heaven announces the happiness of the martyrs and One like a son of mankind reaps the harvest of the earth.

Still more striking is the fact that, though all of these messengers are under the Son of Mankind, and are carrying out His orders, in the case of the Harvest this is reversed. Perhaps this is why we do not read that it *was* the Son of Mankind, but One *like* a son of mankind. No one doubts that this is Christ, yet it is not in accord with His high dignity to take this subordinate position, for here He takes His orders from a messenger out of the temple!

Is it not plain that the Man of Sorrows, Who always dealt out blessing in His lowly sojourn on earth (if we except the cursing of the fig tree), still delights to deal out mercy, and when, amidst the dreadful storm clouds that lower over the guilty earth, a bright cloud of blessing is to descend, it is His delight to exchange places with His subordinates and seize the sickle with His own pierced hand? Judgment is given to the Son of Mankind, not because He is made of sterner stuff than others, but because He can sympathize with sorrow-stricken humanity. He has endured their woes and knows their weaknesses.

The sight of a *white* cloud in such a stormy sky is very striking. It is the color, not of condemnation, but of justification. Not only our Lord Himself (Mat. 17:2; Mark 9:3; Luke 9:29), but His messengers (Mat. 28:3; Mark 16:5; John 20:12; Acts 1:10) and the heavenly elders (Un. 4:4) are clothed in white. This is the color of the robes of righteousness, granted to the conquerors

(3:4, 5, 18), the souls under the altar (6:11), the vast throng (7:9, 13), and those who compose the army of Christ at His advent (19:11, 14).

White clouds do not alarm us. They do not threaten. Not so with black clouds. They bring fear and even terror at their approach, and are often present in this scroll. Here they are absent. The cloud is white.

The cloud is big with blessing, even if the only portal to bliss is the sharp sickle of death, for these martyrs are those who not only live, but also reign with Christ during the thousand years. And, strange to say, the blessing comes only through the death-dealing sickle, for those who are not reaped by its keen edge, and raised again in the former resurrection, are left for the awful fury of an indignant God, unless under His special protection.

The "crown" or wreath is a fitting symbol here, for it speaks of both reward and dominion. It was given to the winners in the games and was worn by those of regal rank. As a prize it was twined of some perishable plant. As a royal head piece it was made of precious metal. This wreath is of gold. It suggests to us the One Who has won the prize of earthly dominion and is exercising His royal rights as the great Reaper. But He reaps only the seed He has sown. The darnel sown by the enemy is left for messengers (Mat. 13:37-39). After they have gathered the darnel into bundles, that it may be burned, the grain is gathered into His barn.

What a contrast is this golden trophy of His achievements with the wreath of thorns braided by the soldiers of Cæsar! In these two incidents, the first and last times we read of a wreath in the Greek Scriptures, we are given a miniature of His whole career. He who *suffers* shall reign! He of the wreath of thorns is the only One Who may wear the wreath of gold. Is not this why He condescends to stoop down to earth before His glorious advent in order to stop the sufferings of His saints? They also have suffered, and they shall reign with Him.

By a blessed death they are spared further trial and thus escape the furious inflictions which are yet to come under the figure of the seven bowls.

The golden wreath is on His *head*. We might be captious and criticize this as a needless item of information, but we have learned to value divine "blemishes" above human corrections. The first time we read of Him in the character He here assumes, His head had no crown. "The jackals have burrows, and the flying creatures of heaven roosts, yet the Son of Mankind has nowhere that He may be reclining His head" (Mat. 8:20). As the Son of Mankind He is the Head of all earth's creatures. The animals are among the lowest subjects in His dominion. They are provided for. Yet He, their Head, had nowhere to pillow it! Now, what a change! It is not weary. It wants no resting place. It is adorned with the symbol appropriate to its high place and power.

Once more we are reminded that the main issue in this section is worship. These martyrs are not massacred for refusing allegiance, or for lack of loyalty to the political pretensions of the great emperor, but because they will not worship his image or wear his emblem. The messenger who gives the order to reap comes out of the *temple* (14:15). Those who refuse to receive the antichrist are remembered in the sanctuary. Their deliverance is decreed in the presence of God.

In the opening of the next section we will meet these martyrs again, standing on the fire-flecked glassy sea, with lyres or harps in their hands, singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lambkin (15:2-4). As they are there, in vision, before the messengers with the last seven calamities pour out the bowls of hoarded fury into the land, they are saved from the most terrific of all the divine visitations. Indeed, these martyrs are the immediate cause of these fierce inflictions, and are prefaced, along with the song of Moses, to vindicate the divine vengeance.

THE VINTAGE

However we may be inclined to associate a vintage with joy and gladness, the figure here refers us to the most fearful destruction, under the aspect of the treading. In the early days, when Southern California produced great stores of wine, I used to watch the barefooted men trampling down the grapes in the great trough, and see the juice flow forth below. Even then it seemed a shame to tread down the beautiful black berries.

In this respect the Vintage differs from the Harvest. Nothing is said about the *threshing* of the wheat, which might suggest severity, if not destruction. But here much is made of the *treading* of the grapes. This suggests a lesson in figures of speech which few seem to heed. *Press only the expressed points of contact between the literal and the figurative.* If a figure is like the literal in all points it is no longer a figure, for likeness then gives place to identity. *Ignore all the implications.* They are not a part of the figure. The harvesting of fully ripe wheat usually includes threshing. That is literal, and true. But if threshing is not specifically mentioned, its injection is false and misleading. There will be no threshing of the Harvest.

Again our attention is drawn to the temple, as the origin of this infliction. On this occasion two messengers emerge, one from the temple, and one from the altar, and each is connected with an agent of destruction. The messenger who came out of the temple had a sharp sickle.

The reaper is urged to his task by another messenger. He doubtless suggests the motive for the Vintage. He comes out of the altar. He has jurisdiction over fire. Does not this remind us of a similar scene in the political section? Under the fifth seal the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and their testimony are found under the altar, whence this messenger emerges. They cry for vengeance on their murderers. But they are bidden to rest until the massacre of their

brethren is complete (6:9-11). It is at this point that the messenger comes out of the altar and orders the Vintage to proceed.

When the Harvest is ended and many of the faithful have been offered up as sacrifices for their faith, and their blood poured at the bottom of the altar, then it is time for the vengeance of the Vintage. Just as the blood of Abel cried out to God after he was dead, so the sufferings of God's elect will demand the retribution of the Vintage. The Harvest is not to be confused with it, but is its cause. It is finished before it because it leads to it.

The messenger who comes out of the altar has jurisdiction over its fire. The sacrificial flame must be kept burning at all times. It should have been in charge of one of Israel's priests. Now, however, it seems destined to die out. There is no other way of perpetuating the worship of God on earth but to destroy those who are extirpating the saints. The blood beneath the altar and the fire on the altar become vocal in their insistence on the destruction of the wild beast and his minions.

Near the close of the next section we come upon the Vintage again, in connection with the destruction of the wild beast and its armies by the White Horse Rider (19:11-21). There we are told Who the Treader is. "And *He* is treading the wine trough of the furious indignation of God, the Almighty. And on His cloak and on His thigh He has a name written: 'King of kings and Lord of lords'." This brings the career of the wild beast to its close and ushers in the millennial reign. Hence we have once more arrived at the crisis heralded by the seventh trumpet. The succeeding section must be anterior to this, so covers the same period of time.

The prophet Joel has a most graphic account of this epoch, and uses the same figures of speech. He gives us many details and settles many doubtful points, so we will give two passages from his third chapter in full, revising slightly to make them sufficiently concordant to be safe.

JOEL 3:1, 2 (in Heb. 4:1, 2)

For lo! in those days and in that era,
 In which I turn back the captivity of Judah and Jeru-
 salem,
 I gather together all the nations also,
 And cause them to descend into the vale of Jehoshaphat
 [Jehovah-JUDGE]
 And I am judged with them there
 As to My people and My allotment, Israel,
 Whom they disperse among the nations,
 And they apportion My land.

JOEL 3:9-17 (in Heb. 4:9-17)

Call this among the nations:
 "Hallow a war! [*or* Proclaim a holy war!]
 Rouse the mighty!"
 (They are coming close!
 All the mortal warriors are ascending!)
 "Pound your colters into swords,
 And your pruning hooks into lances!"
 (He who is overcome shall be saying, "Mighty am I!")
 "Mobilize and come, all nations from around,
 And muster!"
 "There cause thy mighty ones to settle, Jehovah!"

* * * * *

The nations are rousing and ascending to the vale of
 Jehoshaphat [Jehovah-JUDGE]
 For there I am sitting to judge all the nations from
 around.

"Send forth the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.
 Come, descend, for the wine trough is full.
 The vats run over, for their evil is much."
 Throngs, throngs in the vale of decision!
 For the day of Jehovah is near in the vale of decision!
 The sun and moon are somber,
 And the stars gather in their brightness,
 And Jehovah from Zion is roaring,
 And from Jerusalem He is giving forth His voice,
 And the heavens and the earth quake.
 And Jehovah is a refuge to His people,
 And a stronghold to the sons of Israel.
 "And you shall know that I, Jehovah, am your God,
 Tabernacling in Zion, My holy mountain."
 And Jerusalem becomes holy
 And aliens shall not be passing in her furthermore.

The latter passage is dramatic in its interchange of
 narrative and dialogue. We view all, not as a far-off

future event, but as though we were present, looking down on the climax and culmination of human rebellion and divine forbearance. A few words in explanation of the new renderings may be appreciated before we pass on to a consideration of the passages as a whole.

The rendering "am judged" is rather a bold stroke, though perfectly justified by the facts. The usual rendering "plead", is merely a concession to the erroneous idea that judgment involves condemnation. It does not. Jehovah and His people are going to get their deserts as well as the nations. It is the Niphal form of the Hebrew *shpht*, *judge*, which may have a middle or a passive force. It is really middle, in this passage, for Jehovah is the actor and the one acted upon. The nations are not represented as acting.

"Mortal" is one of the words usually translated *man*. It means *incurable*, and refers to the sin and infirmity of humanity. It is a pity to confuse it with the other names for humanity, for it is filled with significance in many of its occurrences. Here it is very suggestive. Man's proud armies are mortal. Jehovah's hosts are beyond their power. How insanely impotent is their struggle against God! We feel that the word "mortal", which English already sanctions in the sense of human, is a valuable rendering, and hope that it will be welcomed by students of the Scriptures.

There is good reason to follow the Authorized Version rendering *share* in 1 Samuel 13:20. If this is right, then the word here used, *eth*, is probably the *colter*, or *coulter*, as they themselves render it in 1 Samuel 13:20, 21. This is an instructive instance in which the translators were forced to use the vocabulary method, because both of these words came together in one passage and had to be discriminated. We are simply extending this advantage to all the occurrences. Besides, a plowshare, even if beaten into the shape of a sword, would be an unwieldy weapon, too heavy to carry. But the colter, a steel blade fastened

to the beam to cut the sod before the share turns it over, is much easier to fashion into a sword, and more likely to be used.

“The valley of decision” is rather a good rendering, hence we have decided that it cannot be much improved. The literal Hebrew suggests the idea of a *point*. It is used of the pointed iron instrument which was used in threshing grain. It suggests the climax, or culmination of Jehovah’s dealing with the nations. It is not merely that the controversy is decided, but that the turning point has arrived when the nations go their full length and Jehovah brings the matter to a culmination.

The word *kadar* is usually represented by *black* or *dark*, each of which has its own Hebrew equivalent. It is, however, often translated *mourn* (Job 5:11; 30:28; Psa. 38:6; etc.). That it does not mean absolute blackness is evident from several passages. What is needed is an English word which combines the meaning of *darkness* with *sadness*. This we have in *somber*. It satisfies both literal and metaphorical usages, and probably is intended to lend a touch of sadness even to this scene, where it is used in its primary sense.

The time of a prophecy is always important. Joel fixes this in a most satisfactory manner. The battle of Jehoshaphat (there is no battle of Armageddon) takes place at the very close of gentile dominion. It is the time when Jehovah settles with them for their treatment of His people. It immediately precedes the restoration of the holy nation.

Joel gives a striking confirmation to our insistence that the real issue of this war is worship. The usual rendering is most inadequate. “*Prepare war*” may seem better English, but it fails to give the sense. The Revisers have “sanctify” in the margin. It means make holy, hallow, like the *jihad*, or holy war, of Islam.

With Joel’s details added to John’s succinct account, we have one of the most notable prophetic forecasts in

the Scriptures. The mere prediction of a great slaughter in the future could hardly fail of fulfillment. That it should be located on a line nearly two hundred miles long involves a prescience unknown to man. That it will be in the vale of Jehoshaphat, involving the mobilized nations of the world, and end in their sudden destruction, with signs in the sun and moon and many other accompanying details, makes it a miracle of guesswork unless inspired by God, for there are billions of chances against the combination, at one time, of so many minute coincidences.

How fitting is the name of this, the decisive battle which changes man's day into the day of Jehovah! Jehoshaphat is a compound of the title of Jehovah and the usual Hebrew word for judge. The culmination of man's misrule and the beginning of Christ's reign can only be wrought by *Jehoshaphat*—the judgment of Jehovah.

As this scene will come before us again we need not linger here now. Before the great war a battle line of one hundred eighty-three miles was considered a fantastic exaggeration. But the western front was much longer than that. This line will be in Palestine, from Har-mageddon, through the valley of Jehoshaphat, to Bozrah (Isa. 34: 6-8; 63: 1-6), which is just the correct length. Here will be such a bloody slaughter as the world has never known before—aye, and will never know again, for fire consumes the insurgent hosts at the close of the thousand years.

The lowest point of this sanguinary stream will run so deep as to challenge belief. The blood from this long trough will rise to the height of the horses' bits. It makes one shudder and sicken even to think of the millions of mangled carcasses which must be bled to make this river of gore, which satiates the awful fury of an offended God. Thus ends man's day. God's forbearance lasts long, but His fury is sudden, swift and summary. Yet His judgment is true and righteous altogether!

The Concordant Version

CHAPTERS 15:1-16:1

15 And I perceived another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven messengers having the last seven calamities—seeing that in them God's fury is consummated. ²And I perceived as it were a glassy sea, mixed with fire, and those who come off conquerors from the wild beast, and from its image, and from the number of its name, standing on the glassy sea, having the lyres of the Lord God. ³And they are singing the song of Moses, the slave of God, and the song of the Lambkin, saying,

“Great and marvelous are Thy acts,
Lord God Almighty!
Just and true are Thy ways,
King of the eons!
⁴Who ne'er may fear Thee, Lord,
And glorify Thy name?
For Thou only art benign,
For all the nations will arrive
And worship before Thee,
For Thy just awards were made manifest.”

⁵And after these things I perceived, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony was opened in heaven. ⁶And the seven messengers, who have the seven calamities, came out of the temple, dressed in clean, resplendent linen, and girded about the chest with golden girdles. ⁷And one of the four animals gives to the seven messengers seven golden bowls brimming with the fury of God, Who is living for the eons of the eons. (*Amen!*) ⁸And the temple is dense with the fumes of the glory of God and of His power. And no one was able to enter into the temple until the seven calamities of the seven messengers should be consummated. **16** And I hear a loud voice out of the temple, saying to the seven messengers, “*Go and be pouring out the seven bowls of God's fury into the land.*”

THE SONG OF MOSES AND OF THE LAMBKIN

BEFORE the bowls are poured out we are given a comprehensive outline of Israel's history as foretold in the song of Moses. This is the key to the judgments that follow. Although Moses' song is not incorporated into the Apocalypse, it is really an important part of it. It is the longest and most comprehensive of all the songs of the end time. We would lose very much, indeed, if we should pass it over as a mere musical number without meaning or message. If our exegesis is correct, we will welcome its confirmatory testimony.

After Moses had finished the writing of the law, he turned from present to predictive prophecy. Apart from the promises and the types, there is very little foretelling in the Pentateuch. To compensate for this, Moses, at the close of his career, gives us a complete epitome of Israel's future history. Though it was called a song, it does not seem to be set to music until it is sung in the days to come. Then it is introduced as the divine prelude to the pouring out of the seven bowls. Let us turn to the thirty-first chapter of Deuteronomy, the twenty-fifth verse, and note how closely the setting corresponds with the scene in the Unveiling, where the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony is opened (15:5). We will give a tentative concordant rendering.

²⁵And Moses is instructing the Levites who carry the coffer of the covenant of Jehovah, saying, ²⁶"Take this scroll of the law and place it at the side of the coffer of the covenant of Jehovah, your God, and it shall be there among you for a testimony. ²⁷For *I* know your rebellion and the hardness of the

nape of your neck. Behold, while I am still living with you today, you become rebellious with Jehovah, and, indeed, what after my death? ²⁸Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes, and your superintendents, and I will speak in their ears all these words. And I will cause the heavens and the earth to testify against them. ²⁹For I know that after my death to corrupt will you be corrupting. And you withdraw from the way which I instruct *you*, and evil meets *you* in the latter days, for you will do evil in the eyes of Jehovah, to vex Him by the deeds of your hands."

³⁰And Moses is speaking in the ears of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song, till they are come to an end:

What a lurid light is cast upon the phrase "the tabernacle of the *testimony*" by Moses' act! Throughout Israel's career, the law has not only been a light to illumine, but also a document to condemn. It is not the basis of blessing, as they vainly imagine, and as its promises seem to imply. In the preceding portion of this Apocalypse, where Jehovah is protecting His people, there is no mention of the law. The opening of the temple did not reveal the *testimony*, but the *covenant*. Blessing comes by God's grace, through Christ, and not through law observance. But the curse of the law must come on the apostate people, who have corrupted the earth, and have turned away from the way in which Moses directed them.

Moses predicted that evil would meet them in the latter days, at a time when Jehovah would be vexed by their doings. Is not this precisely what occurs under the bowls? The song of Moses settles the setting of these inflictions. They are not concerned with the nations but with that law-illumined but apostate portion of His ancient people who break the first commandment. The bowls are poured out upon the Jewish worshipers of the wild beast.

The literary structure of the song of Moses may be familiar to some, but it will bear repetition. It is an *epanodos*, or reversal, of four or more couples. Each subject is treated twice, just as is the case with the Unveil-

ing. The introduction (1-6) and the conclusion (43) are general. First we have God presented in His creation perfection and Israel's failure to sustain their relationship to Him. At the conclusion, however, all is based on propitiation, and there is vengeance for their enemies and joy for His people.

The second couple deals with Israel during the periods of the Pentateuch (7-14) and at the time of the end (37-42). The third couple deals with Israel's apostasy in the land from the standpoint of the period of the kings (15-19). Corresponding to this is His judgment of the apostasy in the future (34-36). The central couple (20-21, 22-33) deals with their long dispersion.

THE SONG OF MOSES

THE INTRODUCTION

- ¹ Give ear, O heavens! and I will speak,
And hear shall the earth the sayings of my mouth.
² Dribbling as rain is my influence,
And distilling as the night mist is my saying,
As showers on verdure,
And as a drizzle on herbage,
³ For in the name of Jehovah am I calling.
Grant greatness to our God!
⁴ The Rock! Flawless is His contriving.
For all His ways are judgment.
A Deity faithful, and without iniquity,
Just and upright is He!
⁵ He Himself corrupts. Not to be His sons is their blemish,
A generation perverse and twisted.
⁶ Jehovah are you requiting thus,
People decadent and unwise?
Is not He your Father Who acquires you?
He makes you and will establish you.

Blessing comes down from above. It is the fruit of heavenly moisture on the plants of earth. It is the water of the Word falling on the human heart. It is based on the divine assumptions, as expressed in the names and titles He assumes. The emphasis is indeed laid on the covenant name Jehovah, for they are His people, but

much is made of the fact that He is also Elohim, the great Arbiter, and El, the Disposer, Who is faithful and just. Besides this He is the Rock, stern, strong, and severe in judgment, yet secure, steadfast and safe.

Having described Jehovah as the Arbiter and Disposer of all, we should be prepared for the abrupt straight-forward declaration, "He corrupts" (5). It is so difficult to receive that almost all versions have changed it. But its very difficulty is the greatest point in its favor. No one would put such a statement in the text, though we can see how readily they would change it. The fact that this "corruption" consisted in satiating them with the material blessings that their souls desired, seems to be the key to its understanding. This puts it in line with the context.

This rendering may be challenged. But this is the exact force of the pointed Massoretic, or traditional text. Without the points it may be read as the infinitive *to corrupt*, but this is not intelligible. It may also be the imperative, singular, *corrupt [you]*, but this gives no relief. Possibly it may be a contraction for the second person singular indicative, *you corrupt*, but this does not help. All of this version is tentative, and yet it is sufficiently concordant to catch all such human departures from the original as this difficult rendering.

This passage answers the grave objection which His action arouses. If He corrupts them, why does He hold them "responsible"? It is noteworthy how often this word is found in human theology, and how foreign it is to the divine records. An Arbiter and Disposer is "responsible", but we may hardly use that word of those who are the subjects of His activities. If His action results in ultimate harm and loss to His people, He must bear the blame. But if it is a temporary measure, with a view to ultimate blessing, He will gain the glory. His corrupting and His judgment of corruption are complementary measures, neither of which can be excused or

defended by itself, yet their combination is fraught with so much good to His people and glory to Himself that they need no defense.

Immediately before this statement is made we are assured that, as the great Disposer of all, He is faithful, without inequity, just and straight. Such emphasis as this seems needless unless there were some reason for thinking otherwise. It is necessary to establish His integrity before making the statement that He corrupts, for few can understand how He can do this and remain righteous.

ISRAEL'S EARLY HISTORY

⁷ Remember the days of the eon.

Understand the years of generation after generation.

Ask your father, and he will tell you,

Your elders, and they will say to you:

⁸ "When the allotment the Supreme made to the nations,

When He parted the sons of Adam,

He stationed the boundaries of the peoples

For the number of the sons of Israel."

⁹ For the portion of Jehovah is His people,

Jacob is the line of His allotment.

¹⁰ He is finding him in a land that is a wilderness,

And in a waste, howling desolation.

He is surrounding him, He is making him understand,

He is preserving him as the pupil of His eye.

¹¹ As a vulture is rousing its nest,

Over its fledglings is fluttering,

Is spreading its wings—He is taking him,

Is lifting him up on His pinions.

¹² Jehovah alone is guiding him,

And with him is no deity that is foreign.

¹³ He will cause him to ride on the fane heights of the land,

And He will cause him to eat the produce of the field.

And He will suckle him with honey from the crag,

And oil from the flinty rock.

¹⁴ Curdled milk of the herd and milk of the sheep,

With fat of meadow lambs, and rams,

Sons of Bashan, and he goats,

With fat of kidney of wheat,

And blood of the grape shall you drink that is turbid.

The early history of Israel is an exhibition of the disposing power of El. All the earth is His. Its central

and most desirable section He reserved for the nation of His choice. But before bringing them into it, He puts them through the evils of Egypt and the discipline of the desert. There He taught them to rely on Him, and look to His care and protection. Then He brought them into the land with its milk and honey, its oil and wine, as well as the spiritual benefits which these signify. Briefly, the process of corrupting the people consisted in loading them with physical delights. The corrupting process was quite the opposite of what we would expect, for it appeared to be the reverse. He gives them their soul's desire. (What is between ⁷ and ⁸ comes from the Septuagint, between ⁸ and ^m from the Samaritan text.)

THE PERIOD OF THE PROPHETS

- ¹⁵ ⁸⁷Jacob is eating and being satisfied. ^{m8}
 And stout is "Upright", and he is kicking,
 You are stout! You are thick! You are burly!
 And he is leaving Eloah Who makes him,
 And is disgracing the Rock of his salvation.
- ¹⁶ They are causing Him to be jealous by means of aliens,
 By means of abominations they are vexing Him.
- ¹⁷ They are sacrificing to demons which are not a god,
 Gods whom they do not know,
 New ones from nearby come.
 No horror of them had your fathers.
- ¹⁸ Of the Rock Who begat you are you oblivious,
 And you are forgetting the Deity Who is travelling with you.
- ¹⁹ And seeing is Jehovah and spurning,
 For vexation over His sons and His daughters.

Surfeiting the soul with good things should lead to the worship of the Giver. But when His people no longer needed His help, their hearts forsook Him and they invoked the gods of the nations. They forgot His goodness and His pains in the past, and transferred their adoration to alien gods and demons. Compare this section with the companion portion (34-36). Only in the land do they transfer their worship to other gods. So, in the time to come, they will worship the wild beast and draw down the vengeance of God in the latter days.

ISRAEL LO AMMI

- ²⁰ And He is saying, "I will conceal My face from them.
I will see what their hereafter is,
For a generation that is wayward are *they*,
Sons with no faithfulness in them.
- ²¹ *They* make Me jealous with that which is no deity,
They vex Me with their vanities.
And I will make them jealous with those who are no people,
With a nation decadent will I vex them.

The remedy for idolatry is very simple. Jehovah withdraws His presence and blessing. Since the captivity they have not worshiped other gods, but they have transferred their affection to the vain *things* which seem to be the source of felicity. Jehovah is jealous and decides to give them over to the sorrows of the dispersion.

THE PERSECUTED NATION

- ²² For a fire kindles in My anger,
And it is glowing unto the unseen beneath,
And it is eating the earth and its crop,
And is setting aflame the foundations of the mountains.
- ²³ I am sweeping up on them evils.
With My arrows I am making a conclusion among them.
- ²⁴ They are emaciated with famine,
And dining on glowing coals,
And an extirpation that is bitter.
And the teeth of beasts am I sending among them,
With venom of the skulkers of the soil.
- ²⁵ From outside is bereaving the sword,
And from the chambers, dread,
Even the chosen man, even the virgin,
The suckling with the man who is hoary.
- ²⁶ I say, in anger, 'Where are they?'
I will cause to cease from mortals their remembrance,
- ²⁷ Unless, because of the vexing of the enemy, I shall shrink,
Lest it be recognized by their foes,
Lest they shall say, 'Our hand is high!'
And 'It is not Jehovah Who contrives all this.'
- ²⁸ For a nation of perishing counsels are they,
And there is in them no understanding.
- ²⁹ O that they were wise, they were intelligent in this!
They should understand their hereafter,
- ³⁰ How one should pursue a thousand,
And two put to flight a myriad,

Should not their Rock sell them,
And Jehovah enclose them!

³¹ For not as our Rock is their rock,

And our enemies are the mediators.

³² For from the vine of Sodom is their vine,

And from the plantations of Gomorrah.

Their grapes are grapes of poison.

They are clusters of bitterness for them.

³³ The venom of monsters is their wine,

And the poison of cobras that is cruel.

Israel is under the heel of the nations. They are being disciplined by their enemies. Jehovah restrains their persecutors in order that His hand may be evident. Even their joy, under the figure of wine, is bitter and poisonous. This leads us up to the end time.

THE FAITHFUL JUDGED

³⁴ Is not *it* amassed with Me,

Sealed among My treasures,

³⁵ For the day of vengeance and repayment,

For the season when their foot shall slip?

For near is the day of their calamity,

And hurrying is the equipment for them."

³⁶ For Jehovah shall adjudge His people,

And over His servants shall He repent.

For He shall see that the power departs from their hand,

And there is a limit to restraining and forsaking.

On some this discipline has the desired effect. Jehovah judges among His people, as seen in the ecclesias of the Unveiling, and in the deliverance of the hundred forty-four thousand and the vast throng. At the end time the divine restraint reaches its limit. He arises to avenge His saints and repay their enemies.

THE PERIOD OF THE BOWLS

How apt is God's appeal to His apostate people at the time of the end! When the wild beast is exalting himself as the divine arbiter of humanity, when he threatens with death all who do not worship him, when he makes it well nigh impossible to escape from his hand, when he threatens dire destruction on all who remain

faithful to God, then it is that the great Arbiter protests with sublime vehemence.

- ³⁷ And He says. "Where are their gods,
The rock in whom they take refuge,
³⁸ Who the fat of their sacrifices are eating,
Drinking the wine of their libation?
Are they rising and helping you?
Are they becoming over you a concealment?"
- ³⁹ See now that I, I am He!
And there are no gods with Me!
I am putting to death and preserving alive,
I stab and I will heal.
And from My hand there is no rescue!
- ⁴⁰ For I am lifting up to the heavens My hand,
And I say, 'Living am I for the eon!'
- ⁴¹ Should I whet My lightning sword,
And take hold of judgment with My hand,
I will return vengeance to My foes,
And those who hate Me will I repay.
- ⁴² Drunken shall I make My arrows with blood,
And My sword shall devour flesh,
From the blood of the wounded and the captive,
From the head of the apostasies of the enemy."

No weightier testimony could be given to the apostates of Israel in the end time than this part of Moses' song. He is accorded the highest place among the prophets. His song has been on the lips of the nation during its entire history. All Israelites are acquainted with it. It is a full vindication of the judgment of the bowls. It is Israel's function to teach the nations to worship the true God. There can be no higher pitch of apostasy than for them to receive the mark of the wild beast. This act calls for the supremest possible punishment.

Can we imagine the feelings of a direly distressed Israelite when the wild beast gives him the option of devotion or death? With what power will he remember Jehovah's word: *Ani, Ani, Hu!*—"I, I am He!" "I put to death and keep alive!" He may well reason that, though it seems impossible to escape the wild beast, surely no one can be rescued from the hand of Jehovah! He lives for the eons. He is far more to be feared than

the wild beast. But many will not reason thus. Upon them He pours out the besom of the bowls. For them He whets the lightning of His sword. His arrows become drunk with their blood.

ISRAEL RESTORED AND BLESSED

- ⁴³ 7 Be glad, O heavens, simultaneously with Him! 0
 7 And let the sons of God worship Him! 0
 Shout for joy, ye nations, with His people,
 7 And be strengthened in Him, all sons of God, 0
 For the blood of His servants shall He avenge,
 And vengeance will He return to His foes,
 7 And those who hate Him He will repay 0
 And He shelters His ground, His people.

Hitherto the nations have caused Israel to groan in anguish, but, when their salvation comes to Israel and Jehovah becomes their God, they will become a channel of blessing to the nations and will receive their appreciation and applause. This leads beyond the period of the bowls. It refers rather to God's judgment of the nations, based upon their treatment of His people. For, while God uses the alien peoples to discipline the holy nation, He deals with them in judgment also, so that there is a double benefit. The result is rejoicing and shouts of joy which will echo throughout the earth for the thousand years.

THE SONG OF THE LAMBKIN

The prelude to the bowls includes the song of the Lambkin also. It is the complement of Moses' song. That dealt with Israel's past history, as the basis for the judgment in view. This deals with their future story which follows these inflictions. Those who come off conquerors from the wild beast and from its image, and from the number of its name, tune their lyres to the song of the Lambkin, which celebrates the acts and the ways and the name of the Almighty King.

The concordant method, at first glance, seems to be a great hindrance to any attempt at versification. It leaves

little or no room for such changes as poetry requires. But the lofty strains of this song should be set to music, its diction should be measured, to accord with its exalted style. We have sought to do this without seriously modifying its meaning.

“Great and marvelous are Thy acts,
Lord God Almighty!
Just and true are Thy ways,
King of the eons!
Who ne’er may fear Thee, Lord,
And glorify Thy name?
For Thou only art benign,
For all the nations will arrive
And worship before Thee,
For Thy just awards were made manifest.”

The song of Moses recites the failure of Israel’s sons to worship their God, but the song of the Lambkin celebrates the glorious fact that all the nations will bring their service and adoration to Jehovah. They have seen His acts; they have learned His ways; they rejoice in His justice. Israel’s priestly work prevails.

Such is the preparatory scene for the most awful of the divine inflictions. Before the bowls are poured out upon His apostate people the Lord God fully vindicates the righteous beneficence of His strange work. He uses the fatal failure of His people to observe the first commandment as an object lesson which brings Him the worship of all nations. We are now prepared to apprehend the out-pouring of the seven bowls.

CHAPTER 16:2-21

²And the first came forth and pours out his bowl into the land. And an evil and malignant ulcer came upon those of mankind having the emblem of the wild beast, and those worshipping its image.

³And the second pours out his bowl into the sea. And it became blood as if of the dead, and every living soul died which is in the sea.

⁴And the third pours out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water. And they became blood. ⁵And I hear the messenger of the waters saying: "Just art Thou, Who art, and Who wast, Benign One, seeing that Thou judgest these, ⁶seeing that they shed the blood of saints and prophets and Thou dost give them blood to drink—*they deserve it!*" ⁷And I hear one from the altar saying: "Yea, Lord God, Almighty, true and just are Thy judgments!"

⁸And the fourth messenger pours out his bowl on the sun. And it was given to him to scorch mankind with fire. ⁹And men are scorched with the great heat, and they blaspheme the name of God, Who has the jurisdiction over these calamities, and they do not repent, to give glory to Him.

¹⁰And the fifth pours out his bowl on the throne of the wild beast. And its kingdom became dark; and they gnawed their tongues for misery ¹¹and blaspheme the God of heaven for their miseries and their ulcers; and they do not repent of their acts.

¹²And the sixth pours out his bowl on the great river Euphrates. And its water is dried up in order that the road of the kings of the orient may be made ready. ¹³And I perceived, out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the wild beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet three unclean spirits, as if frogs ¹⁴(for they are spirits of demons doing signs), which are going out to the kings of the whole inhabited earth, to be mobilizing them for the battle of the great day of God Almighty. ¹⁵("Lo! I am coming as a thief! Happy is he who is watching and keeping his garments, that he may not be walking naked and they may be observing his indecency!") ¹⁶And they mobilized them at the place called, in Hebrew, "Harmageddon".

¹⁷And the seventh messenger pours out his bowl on the air. And a loud voice came out of the temple of God, saying, "*It has occurred!*" ¹⁸And lightnings and voices and thunders occurred. And a great earthquake occurred such as did not occur since mankind came to be on the earth, a quake prodigious, it is so great. ¹⁹And the great city came to be divided into three parts; and the cities of the nations fall. And Babylon the great is brought to remembrance before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His furious indignation. ²⁰And every island fled, and the mountains were not found. ²¹And hail large as a talent weight is descending out of heaven on men. And men blaspheme God as a result of the calamity of hail, seeing that great is its calamity—*tremendous!*

THE BESOM OF THE BOWLS

God's judgments are just. To whom much is given, of him is much required. The severest of His inflictions cannot be visited on all, without discrimination. In consequence, some of the bowls are clearly localized. One falls on the throne of the wild beast, another on the Euphrates. This leads us to conclude that its intensive phases focus on the apostate nation, and deal with that limited area which is the special sphere of Jehovah's manifestation through His chosen people Israel.

Not only are the judgments confined in scope, but they are limited to the sphere of religion. We cannot repeat too often the fact that the judgments of the seals and trumpets are political, so were ushered in by a vision of the throne, but the bowls are religious, hence are preceded by the opening of the temple. Nor can we be too insistent on the further distinction between the two temple openings, the former disclosing the covenant, and concerned with Jehovah's care for His people, and the latter exposing the law, or testimony, to view, for the infraction of which He is about to deal with them in unrestrained fury.

The bowls are poured out upon the worshipers of the wild beast (16:2), on those who shed the blood of saints and prophets (16:6). They cause men to blaspheme God (16:11) and His name (16:9), and include the complete destruction of great Babylon. All of these have to do, not with political power, but with divine

relationships. Human religion, as headed up in the wild beast and the false woman of Shinar's plain, receive the final and most fearful of God's visitations.

The term "vial", which is usually applied to these judgments, is inadequate and misleading. There were no vials used in the temple service. The messengers used the golden basins or bowls belonging to the divine ritual. A vial is usually a small, narrow vessel, with its opening no larger than its body. This utterly fails to impress the proper picture on our minds. During the concluding climax of the judgment era, the worship of God will consist in emptying the golden bowls of the temple, brimming with God's furious indignation, on those who usurp God's place upon the earth.

The bowls are given to the messengers by one of the animals. If we were allowed to speculate as to which one of them would fulfill this office, I suppose we would all agree that the vulture probably placed the bowls in the hands of the messengers. Neither the man nor the calf were suited to this task. The lion is associated with rule. But the vulture, with far-seeing vision, sweeping over the corrupt mass of humanity, might well prepare for a feast such as ends the outpouring of the bowls, when the birds are invited to God's great dinner (19:17).

After much meditation we are convinced that it is impossible to identify the trumpets and bowls. They do not agree with each other. The lesson for us lies in their contrasts, rather than their likenesses. Neither can we make the bowls an expansion of the seventh trumpet. There can be little doubt that the seven trumpets are due to the opening of the seventh seal. There is a close concord in the figures used. Both are concerned with the political deliverance of the earth. Not so with the bowls. They are not only widely separated from the seventh trumpet in the text, but the figures are incongruous, and they have different objects in view. In

every detail they differ from each other. Only in time are they associated, for all of the seven bowls seem to be poured out during the seventh trumpet's blast.

THE FIRST BOWL

In the previous section the Israelitish votaries of the wild beast are warned that they will have no rest day and night if they worship the image or get the emblem of its name (14:11). The first bowl is the fulfillment of this threat. An ordinary boil or carbuncle is one of the most distressing and rest-breaking of afflictions. Most of us know this by sad experience. But the ulcers of the first bowl are not the common kind. They will be evil and malignant. There will be no rest, no respite from the pain, the distress, the desperate depression which comes when the body is transformed into a loathsome fountain of corruption.

The best commentary on the feelings of those afflicted is found in the book of Job. Though he did not curse God and die, as his wife would have him do, he begins his complaint by cursing his day and lamenting his very existence. As in his case, the worshipers of the wild beast will not take the calamity as a mere matter of health, but will undoubtedly discern the hand of God in it. They had been hounded by the emissaries of the wild beast. To escape death they had accepted his emblem. Now they could count on a little relief! But no. They are plagued with pains which preclude all rest, day or night.

We do not wish to suggest any doubt concerning the literal nature of this torment. We have no sympathy with the spiritualizing process which effectually saps all significance from the Scriptures. But this does not deny the possibility of a close correspondence between the physical fact and its spiritual force. An ulcer is the outward evidence of inward corruption. Apostasy from

God is always followed by decadence in morals, mentality and health. Severance from the life of God leads to the corruption of death. The first bowl simply corrected the false appearance of the apostates. The physical foulness comes to the surface. In this case it also suggests a heart, rotten at the core.

The only trumpet which has anything to correspond with the ulcers is the torment of the scorpion-tailed locusts under the fifth sounding (9:5). That will last five months and never prove fatal. The serpent-tailed horses of the sixth trumpet (9:19) also seem to be instruments of torture, for they kill only with the fire and fumes and sulphur which issue out of their mouths.

THE SECOND BOWL

The sea is the scene of the second scourge. It became blood, not the warm, flowing fluid which fills our veins, but such as is found in the dead. It is useless to tell stories of how the sea looked like blood on some rare occasion. I myself have beheld it of a brownish tinge for miles along the coast. At night, however, it presented one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen. In the dense darkness the breakers broke into a dazzling luminous spray which lined the strand with light. No such manifestation as this comes before us here. It is a most dire and dreadful disaster, for it brings death to all the denizens of the deep.

The first plague at the time of the Exodus corresponds to the second and third bowls. The waters were turned into blood. "And Jehovah is saying to Moses, 'Say to Aaron, "Take your rod and stretch out your hand on the waters of Egypt, on their rivers, on their streams, and on their ponds, and on all their confluences of water, and they shall become blood.'" And blood will come to be in all the land of Egypt, also in wood and in stone.' And Moses and Aaron are doing so, according

as Jehovah directs. And he is elevating the rod and is smiting the waters which are in the stream in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters which are in the stream are turned to blood. And the fish which are in the stream die, and the stream is stinking. And the Egyptians cannot drink the water from the stream. And there is coming to be blood in all the land of Egypt'' (Exodus 7:19-21).

The second trumpet seems to be very similar to the second bowl. In both the waters of the sea become blood. It affected, not only the creatures which are in the sea, but also the ships.

THE THIRD BOWL

In these days it is not needful to stress the necessity of a pure water supply. Much of our health and enjoyment is absolutely dependent on fresh drinking water. And what could be more nauseating than blood, in place of the pure, sparkling fluid which refreshes and revives the soul? This infliction is especially for those who are blood guilty. They have shed the blood of God's saints. Now let them drink it! Nothing else could so effectively bring home to them the terrible nature of their crime, or so sicken them of their murderous deeds.

The third trumpet seems much the same as the third bowl, but then the rivers and springs were made bitter by being impregnated with absinth or wormwood, and many died of this poisonous drink.

THE FOURTH BOWL

Few of mankind realize how narrow are the confines of their existence. In space, they are limited to the surface of the earth. A few feet down, a few miles up, and the bars of death force them to stop. Another prison which effectually confines them is made by the extremes of heat and cold. Not more than two hundred degrees of fahrenheit measures the limits of continuous existence.

I have experienced twenty-seven degrees below zero, as well as one hundred seventeen above. Either was endurable. Neither was comfortable. Much more in either direction, without shelter, would mean death.

How terrible it is then, when the sun, the most beneficent of all God's creations, so far as man is concerned, bursts its benignant bonds, and blasts men with overmuch blessing! Its rays are the very life of mankind. Now they become a scourge.

There is a marked contrast in the somewhat similar fourth trumpet. Both affect the sun. At that time a third of the heavenly luminaries were quenched in darkness. That would be terrifying, indeed, but not so severe as this scorching, searing, consuming sun, this erstwhile friend frowning in fearful fury on forsaken men.

The fourth bowl has no counterpart in the plagues of Egypt.

THE FIFTH BOWL

The fifth bowl seems to be the converse of the preceding one. The intense heat of the sun must have been accompanied with the most brilliant illumination. Now all becomes dark. This stygian scourge seems to center about the throne of the wild beast. The ulcers of the first bowl still seem to stay with them. The miseries brought by the bloody springs and scorching sun still sear their souls. And the darkness does but deepen the direness of their doom. Such is the fate of those who worship God's enemies.

The ninth plague, when Moses stood before Pharaoh, corresponds to the fifth calamity. "And Jehovah is saying to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand to the heavens and there shall come to be darkness over the land of Egypt, and a darkness causing them to grope.' And Moses is stretching out his hand to the heavens and there comes to be a gloomy darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They see not one another and no man rose from

that under him three days. And for the sons of Israel there came to be light in their dwellings'' (Exodus 10: 21-23).

The fifth trumpet has little in common with the fifth bowl. Yet there is darkness also, due to the smoke from the abyss. And even in those days will men seek death, though they will not be able to find it.

THE SIXTH BOWL

The sixth bowl has a very strange mission. It is sent to dry up the Euphrates river. It would be interesting to know all the "interpretations" which this has provoked. I have been assured that it is a prediction of the gradual decay of the Turkish empire. But it is somewhat difficult to see how this would prepare a road for the kings of the Orient. Indeed, all explanations of this sort need far more explaining than the literal fact.

But this is not the only preparation for the great mobilization of earth's armies against Jehovah and His Anointed. It is not an easy matter to convince a world so diverse in its peoples and prejudices that all should combine against a handful of Jews in Palestine. Not long before, the Orient and the Occident had engaged in the greatest of all wars, and its animosities had not died down. Such a concentration of troops seems unreasonable. Hence it is necessary to call in the aid of the unseen world. Unclean spirits of demons proclaim a crusade in every land, and rouse the military ardor of the peoples by performing miraculous signs.

Can we blame the unbelievers of that day for heeding these supernatural signs? Today there are many of the Lord's own saints who prefer a miracle, or that which seems to be one, to His express declaration. They take it as an axiom that all which savors of the superhuman is of God. It is far more likely to be of the evil one. As we approach the end time we may expect more

and more demonic interference in human affairs, and this especially in the sphere of religion, true as well as false.

These demons will be invisible. The fact that they come out of the mouth of the dragon and the wild beast and the false prophet suggests that all that the world will perceive will be a proclamation from the world rulers, which will be attested to each one by some sign which no man can imitate. Doubtless these are some of the strong delusions of the end time (2 Thes. 2:11). But back of the demons, and of the false prophet and the wild beast and the dragon, is God. They are being mobilized, not to destroy Jerusalem and the holy people, but to be themselves destroyed in the great day of God Almighty.

But what of the saints in Jerusalem? Can we imagine how they must feel when the whole world is gathering its armies against them? It is significant that the narrative does not merely turn aside to tell us *about* them. Rather, the Lord interrupts to speak *to* them. "*Lo! I am coming as a thief! Happy is he who is watching and keeping his garments, that he may not be walking naked and they may be observing his indecency!*" When all hope seems gone and the extermination of the saints seems inevitable, then they receive His promise: "*I am coming!*" Today, He is our only expectation. How much more so then, at the very crisis of man's madness against Jehovah and His people!

We do not *watch* for His coming to us. There is nothing for our eyes to see. Such signs as there are, in the world, in the church, in the land of Israel, and among the Jews, all point to His promise to them, not to us. We *wait* for God's Son from heaven. But they must *watch*. The reference seems to be to the temple guard. At intervals during the night they were inspected, to see that they were vigilant. Should one fall asleep

his cloak was taken from him, and he had to endure the shame, coupled with the contempt of his fellows due to one who proved unfaithful. How often has our God warned them of that day! To them He comes as a thief. Therefore, they must watch.

It has become quite the thing for politicians to embellish their highest flights of oratory with figures from the Bible. William Jennings Bryan's "cross of gold" became a slogan. So with the phrase "We stand at Armageddon, and battle for the Lord." Very few, indeed, seem to have seen how unfortunate the reference is. Those who stand at Armageddon will battle *against* the Lord. No one on His side stands at Armageddon. Moreover, no battle will occur in the mountains of Megiddo. The slaughter will occur in the plain below, extending from Esdraelon to Bozra, a distance of nearly two hundred miles.

As the battle which follows the mobilization at Har-mageddon does not seem to be included under the sixth bowl, and is fully described in a later chapter (19:11-21), we will not consider it at this time. As it is the very closing scene under the bowls, it is better to defer it until we have fully considered the fate of Babylon the great.

The second plague in Egypt has a slight resemblance to the sixth calamity in that frogs appear in each. "And Jehovah is saying to Moses, 'Say to Aaron, "Stretch out your hand with your rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and bring frogs on the land of Egypt.'" ' And Aaron is stretching out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and frogs are ascending and covering the land of Egypt" (Ex. 8:5,6 [in Hebrew 8:1,2]).

The sixth trumpet, or second woe, has points of likeness as well as difference. Both mention the Euphrates, and present the picture of hordes prepared to deal out death.

THE SEVENTH BOWL

The seventh bowl, like the seventh trumpet, is a climax, and immediately precedes the Lord's advent in power. It is poured on the air, and lightnings and thunders and voices follow, as well as hail of prodigious size. Those who have not been in a severe hail storm little realize what a terrible thing it may become. The tiny pellets which usually fall may do little damage, but larger stones are destructive. I well remember the time a street car stopped before the apartment in which we lived, and all of its occupants crowded into our rooms without ceremony, for they were sorely frightened. A hail stone as large as a hen's egg had forced its way through the roof of the car, and they were afraid for their lives.

Imagine, then, what will happen when hail stones weighing nearly a hundred pounds apiece will crash down from the heavens. No barrage during the world war was so terrific. It will crush everything in its path and penetrate the very ground. There will be no hiding from its fierce onslaught. It is a wonder that any human being survives such a bombardment.

The seventh Egyptian plague corresponds to the seventh calamity in that hail is found in both.

But the most prodigious manifestation under the seventh bowl is the great earthquake. There have been several severe local quakes within the memory of most of mankind. Japan, especially, has been visited with disastrous shocks. But none of these can be compared with this, the most fearful of those which are future. Mankind has not yet been called upon to endure so great a seismic disturbance. It would probably render the earth uninhabitable if such shocks were at all frequent.

The surface of the earth is full of signs which testify to tremendous upheavals in the past. Recently I examined the strata of an enormous rock. Its top was

about eight thousand feet above sea level. Several thousand feet of it was visible. It probably descended deep into the heart of the mountain. Yet the strata of this tremendous stone were nearly perpendicular. Once it had reclined at right angles to its present position. Some awful force had torn it from its bed and thrust its towering pinnacles more than a mile into the clouds. Such a convulsion would almost surely annihilate every human being. It must have occurred before man was on the earth. The evidences of past upheavals are world-wide. The one hinted at in our text, and probably referred to in Genesis 1:2, seems to have strained and distorted the entire surface of the earth. All was shaken and shattered. No one who reads the rocks aright can agree with science, that all things continue as they were from the creation. Nature, as well as revelation, is cataclysmic. The history of the earth, both before and after man's advent, has been punctuated by cosmic calamities. It has shaken and shuddered, so that its surface is covered with the debris and wreckage of its former glory.

Once more will God shake the earth. Its severity can be faintly imagined from its effects. Every island flees. The mountains are not found. Both islands and mountains are protuberances, extending above the surrounding surface. The only difference is that the islands are in the sea and the mountains on the land. There may be a sudden lateral shock which will shear the mountains from their bases and scatter them on the plains. The water seems to preserve the islands intact, but they are removed to new locations.

There are very many interesting lines of thought suggested by this great quake. There can be little doubt that it comes, not merely as a means of judgment on mankind, but also as a preparation for the ensuing era, in which the physical conditions of life on the earth

will be marvelously improved. It has been suggested that the present disagreement between the geographical north and the magnetic pole is the cause of much distress to mankind. A shock which would harmonize them might not only cause the disasters of the seventh bowl, but also explain the superior physical conditions which mark the millennium.

The effect of such a severe quake on the cities of the world, no matter how modern their monoliths may be, must be little short of total destruction. In the terse words of the text, "the cities of the nations fall". All the marvelous architectural triumphs which make the cities of today such places of pride and pleasure will be wrecked in a moment. The fate that overtook Tokio and San Francisco will be repeated all over the earth, but with tenfold severity. When the very mountains fall, and the islands flee, man's puny habitations collapse in utter ruin. Jerusalem only seems to escape, yet is divided into three parts.

The greatest of all the cities of the end time will be Babylon. It is brought to remembrance before God, and He gives her the cup of the wine of His furious indignation, under the seventh bowl. So important is this theme that two long chapters are devoted to a detailed account of its career and destruction. This will form the subject of our next meditation.

THE SECRET OF BABYLON

UNDER the seventh bowl Babylon the great is brought to remembrance before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His furious indignation (Un. 16:19). The very wording of this sentence is cryptic. Babylon is a city, yet is presented under the figure of a woman. This suggests something so utterly detestable to God that He singles it out for the supreme display of His fury. All of the cities of the nations fall, but one of them is reserved for a special doom. "The great city", Jerusalem, is spared, though trisected, but Babylon is so offensive to Jehovah that it is finally sunk out of sight.

This is not the first time that Babylon's doom has come before us. In the corresponding part of the previous temple section, immediately after the eonian evangel has been proclaimed, a second messenger declares, "*It falls! It falls!—Babylon the great has made all nations drink of the furious wine of her prostitution!*" (14:8). If Jehovah is to fulfill His covenant with faithful Israel, He must rid the earth of the demoralizing influence of this great city. If He vindicates His broken law, He must hurl it into oblivion.

Babylon does not appear in the early parts of this Apocalypse. It is not connected with the throne so closely as with the temple. Its activities are not relegated to the realm of rule, but rather to the sphere of religion. This, of course, is not absolute, but relative. As a woman, Babylon is a sovereign queen. As a city it has a suzerainty which makes vassals of the kings of the earth. Nevertheless, the vital point in its presentation lies in

some secret relationship to God, and not in its rule over mankind.

We hardly need to press the importance of the part she plays in the divine drama of the end time. More than two long chapters are given to the elaboration of her career. About one-ninth of the whole Unveiling is devoted to a description of her doom. There must be a secret of great moment associated with the city, which the saints of that day should understand, that they may be saved from her sins, and from her destruction. It is only as we, in spirit, transport ourselves into that era that we have a clear conception of her crimes and will be able to discern, in the world movements of today, the dim outline of the scarlet woman, already possessed of much of the wealth and power which will drag her down to perdition.

A summary of the babel of interpretations which have made the utmost confusion out of this section would convince us of only one fact, that the expositors of Christendom have utterly missed the meaning of these unfoldings. With a few notable exceptions, all insist on interpreting the literal explanation, and insist that Babylon is symbolic of Rome or some other city or system. As a consequence the secret of the city is unknown. Hence we insist on certain fundamental principles of interpretation which will bring harmony out of the confusion, and initiate us into one of the most subtle and surprising secrets in all the realm of revelation.

If we had the trumpet of one of the messengers of this Unveiling, and could reach the ears of all of its expositors, we would shout with a voice of thunder, "*Do not explain God's explanations!*" There is no wrong in considering, comparing, or discussing them. But do not change them. When he says that the seven lampstands are seven ecclesias (1:20) insist that they are actual called-out companies, not an epoch in the history of Christendom. When a place is "spiritually" called

Sodom and Egypt (11:8), on the other hand, insist that these places are not meant (for only one could be), but are figures for Jerusalem. But Babylon is not figuratively so called. It is not explained. It is the explanation.

The divine exposition is that the woman is a city (17:18). It is not a literal woman. It is a literal city. The people comprising the city are figured by a dissolute female. But they live in a real, not an ideal metropolis. The city is not in Egypt or Italy, England or the United States. It is on the plain of Shinar, on the banks of the Euphrates. Nothing could be more striking than to find this city, the first capital among the nations to rule the world at the beginning of the "times of the gentiles", once more exalted to a supremacy over the kingdoms of the earth. It is the Babylon restored by Nebuchadnezzar, the conqueror of Israel, the place of their captivity in the long ago, which will emerge once more to resume a headship over the nations.

It is a striking fact that *Babylon is the only city which has ever had universal sovereignty* in the past. It was not only the capital of the Babylonian empire, the head of gold of Nebuchadnezzar's image, but also of the succeeding empires. Alexander made it the seat of his government. These kingdoms practically ruled the known world. In contrast to them, the Roman empire had definite limits, in the north and in the east, which it was unable to pass. Rome never was able to subjugate parts of Europe. Under Trajan there a brief possession of Assyria, but it never formed an integral part of Roman territory. Babylon was always beyond or at the very bounds of the empire. It never was its capital.

As much of the confusion among students of prophecy arises from the injection of Rome into the prophetic outlook, we feel it our duty to graciously urge them to reconsider their position. The deductions they themselves make should show the fallacy of this teaching. For years many have been looking for a revival of the

Roman empire, for it is clear that the iron kingdom and the wild beast are present at the end time. But such a restoration would be far from sufficient. Rome's territory was but a small fraction of the earth's surface. The kingdom of the wild beast will include *all* the earth. Even Mussolini's audacious aspirations do not soar to this height. Italy will be but one of the ten western powers, figured by the horns of the wild beast. Rome, pagan or papal, has little place in prophecy.

If we must reason, let us deduce our conclusions from acknowledged facts. We know that the iron kingdom appears at the close of the eras of the nations and that it includes all peoples on the face of the earth. Reviewing universal history, we will find many great empires, some of which attempted to establish a world-wide rule. Napoleon conquered territory which Rome could not subjugate. Great Britain comprises far more territory than Rome could ever claim. Russia covers a vastly greater area. The latter two do not need reviving. The difficulty with all of these is that they are not universal, hence are not the subjects of Daniel's prophecy. Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece were invincible. Their boundaries were never defined. Their authority was undisputed. Rome was surrounded by enemies that defied them. They built a wall across England to keep out the northern invaders.

The imperial Roman edict which ordered the entire inhabited earth to be registered (Luke 2:1) was one of those grandiloquent gestures which characterizes the arrogance of Rome. Cæsar Augustus could easily vanquish the world on paper, but his legions could not conquer Ireland or Scotland or Germany or Syria or the Scandinavian or Russian territories. We may be assured that no one in these regions was enrolled. Contrary to this, we are certain that the iron kingdom of the end time includes *all* nations, *all* peoples. It is especially notable that the kings of the east will bring their armies

to Armageddon, whereas Rome had practically no control in the east. The greater part of the army of the wild beast comes from territory outside of Rome's jurisdiction.

The study of prophecy is continually discredited by those who follow false beacons. The prophetic waste basket is overflowing with discarded dates, and its calendar is full of days that will be thrown away. The revival of the Roman empire is another of these distracting diversions. It not only confuses but makes it impossible to get a clear view of the prophetic outlook. Suppose the Roman empire were restored. Imagine England, France, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, Palestine, Egypt, and Morocco under the dictatorship of Mussolini. What about the rest of the world? Will the Antichrist rule over such a small section of the earth's surface? Where do the British dependencies come in? Have Germany and Russia no part with him? Are the Americas left out of his dominions?

Were it true, the Roman restoration would put us into accord with the prophecies of the end time. It produces the opposite effect. It creates more questions than it answers. Instead of reasoning that the kingdom of the future will be limited to the territory of the past, we should accept the divine declaration of its world-wide extent, and deduce from this that Rome was not the world empire foretold by Daniel. Then we are free to examine the prophecies afresh, with the result that they unroll before us with a seven-fold scope and magnificence. It is not a local Mediterranean conflict they present, but a tragedy embracing the east and the west, the Orient as well as the Occident, the heathen countries as well as Christendom.

Another disturbing fallacy is the assumption that the wild beasts of Daniel seven are the divine counterparts of the various divisions of the great image. The parts of the image are successive. They follow one another on

the stage of history. The wild beasts are contemporaneous. They are all present at the end time. It is true that in Daniel, as in the Unveiling, the beasts give us the religious aspect, while the image emphasizes the political history of the gentile supremacy. But it does not follow that they deal with the same empires or the same time. Indeed, at the time Daniel received the vision of the wild beasts, Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold, had passed into history.

All of these considerations are important, if we wish to understand the secret of Babylon and of the wild beast which is supporting her. This wild beast is undoubtedly the same one which came before us in the previous section, for it also has seven heads and ten horns. This wild beast must be a composite of those which Daniel saw, for this one has all the features of the four combined into one. If Daniel's beasts, corresponding to the image, were the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and another world empire, then the woman must be considered as being supported by these. If the woman is Rome, in any sense, then Rome was supported by Babylon!

There is something very remarkable and astounding in the secret of great Babylon and the wild beast. John certainly did not "admire" it. He marveled at it. It seemed unbelievable. This, we submit, is the touchstone which will test our understanding of this secret. Do we also feel dazed at it? Can we join with John in wide-eyed wonder at the possibility of such a thing? If we find ourselves in sympathy with his mood we are probably in possession of the truth.

In the previous section we have the same characters, a wild beast and a woman. Throughout, however, there is the utmost enmity between the two. The woman is Israel, the faithful remnant. She is the victim of the world's religious powers, combined under the figure of the wild beast. The federated faiths of the world,

now Christian, Buddhist, Brahman, and Mohammedan, merged in one Godless, Christless, lifeless cult, to worship the human head of the world empire, try to exterminate the handful of Jews who remain faithful to the God of their fathers. John does not marvel at this. In a lesser degree he had experienced the hatred of the world himself.

But what is this? Here is a woman and the wild beast again. But *there is no enmity*. They are on the best of terms. In fact, the wild beast supports, instead of persecuting her! Can it be that Israel—even apostate Israel—will be in league with the enemies of Jehovah? Will she be the recipient of their favors? And, while thus allied with the powers of evil, she is not smitten by the wrath of God, but actually seems to enjoy the very favors which she should forfeit. Instead of losing the right to rule the nations, she seems to have put them into subjection and under tribute without the help of Jehovah!

This is what astonished John. This is the secret of Babylon and the wild beast. It lies in the relation of the apostate people to the godless religion of the end time. Instead of suffering like the saints, these supreme sinners seem to receive every token of divine approval. Without waiting for the return of Messiah, they rule a rebellious earth. The treasures of the nations are theirs without the intervention of Jehovah. They have taken their own destiny in hand, and have succeeded in gaining supreme control of the earth. They have established a super-government which dictates the policies of all cabinets and demands tribute from all treasuries.

The very name given to this woman should be sufficient to identify her. Only those in covenant relationship with God can be guilty of a breach such as is charged to her. No one who enters into relationship with God in this day of grace can possibly come under this condemnation. We are not under a covenant. Apos-

tate Christendom is already accounted for. It is a part of the wild beast. God entered into covenant with Israel in the flesh, but with no other people. We have just seen how He remembers His covenant. Now we are to see how He deals with the covenant breakers, who are presented to us under the figure of a woman who is not true to her marriage vows. Babylon must have been married to Jehovah, otherwise she could not be judged for faithlessness.

The evidences of her perfidy abound, and may best be appreciated by contrast with the faithful woman of the preceding section, who is presented in the midst of pain and persecution, depending upon divine intervention for succor and sustenance, hated and hounded by the dragon, the wild beasts and the nations. The purple woman is the antithesis of all this. She is riding the wild beast. She has every appearance of worldly wealth and regal opulence. Purple and scarlet, gold and gems and pearls are the sure signs of her royal magnificence. She consorts with kings. What higher place could be given to her on earth? Her picture could be painted in no brighter colors.

The full significance of the purple robe upon the scarlet beast may not dawn on us until we read that she has a kingdom over the kings of the earth (17:18). As these kings are incorporated in the scarlet wild beast, her sway is seen in the fact that she is sitting on it. It not only is her support, but is under her control. She is a suzerain. This is the place which Israel will possess during the thousand years. Hence she is enjoying a false and premature millennium. It is a satanic travesty of Jehovah's kingdom, when His people will reign over the nations under the leadership of Messiah.

We are profoundly convinced that this woman is in process of formation at the present time. All that will blossom in Babylon is already in bud. All that we see here in the prophetic word is already taking form in the

world about us. We can see the purple and the scarlet, the gold and gems and pearls. The people are already drinking out of the golden cup, and the woman is drinking the blood of the saints. This conviction has been greatly strengthened during the past few years by evidence gathered from many sources. Without interfering with the present administration, Israel is preparing to play her part in the impending era of God's indignation.

When we were writing "The Mystery of Babylon", we profoundly regretted the fact that it was impossible for us to inquire more exhaustively into Jewish affairs. We had learned enough about their supremacy in such fields as finance, amusements, music, and far more questionable means of gain, to see how fully these activities agreed with the picture of Babylon here presented. But neither time nor means was available for such an investigation. Not long afterward, however, the publication of "The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion" started others along this very line, and resulted in a remarkable series of articles in the *Dearborn Independent*, on "The International Jew, the World's Foremost Problem".

Never has a new interpretation received stronger or clearer confirmation. It is not at all necessary to prove that the Protocols are "genuine". They were written by some one or they would not be in existence. They themselves are evidence that the spirit of coming Babylon is already alive and at work. All of the features of the sovereignty of the scarlet woman are now in operation and many of the plans for gentile subjugation are accomplished facts. Perhaps nothing proves their power more than the practical repudiation and suppression of the series which discussed the matter.

The Protocols are supposed to be the reports of secret sessions of an early Zionist congress in Basel, Switzerland. In these secret sittings Jews of international eminence are supposed to have plotted the degradation and

subjugation of the world. It is well known that many of its ideas are not new, but were taken from previous writings, such as a French book entitled "Conversations between Machiavelli and Montesquieu in Hell". The intense vitality of the Protocols depends on the fact that Judaism is about to do what it discloses. Otherwise it has little to commend it. There is no reliable evidence that the Jews have combined to accomplish this end. So far they have been fighting among themselves. Only lately are they beginning to see how futile their internal strife is. Perhaps the Protocols are intended to put the idea of world dominion, based on wealth, into their minds.

In Berne, Switzerland, in seeking to have the book forbidden, as a forgery, the Jews have brought to light a lot of evidence which shows that the book is not what it claims to be at all. The defense was unable to prove its authenticity. The most plausible story is that, at the beginning of the century, it assumed its present form under the auspices of the Russian secret police. The object was to furnish the Russian government with a good excuse for their bloody pogroms, because the Jews were bringing in democratic ideas which imperiled the security of the ruling class. It is said that this was substantiated by detailed testimony on the part of witnesses who once belonged to Russian court circles, who knew the names of the very men who gave the book its present form.

Throughout the publication of "The International Jew" assurance was given that nothing was printed unless verified. I had a personal conversation with one of the investigators. He insisted that he and all others were strictly cautioned to report nothing of which there was any doubt. It is against good newspaper policy to print anything which can be construed as defamatory or derogatory to the Jews. Only those of independent (or no) financial standing dare do it. So we may well be-

lieve there is ample ground for saying that, just as the Jews all over the world are preparing the land for the time of the end, so also are they developing the spiritual outlines of the apostate woman, which is the secret of great Babylon.

With this in view, let us see if we cannot discover, in the still shadowy outlines of present Jewish life, some of the purple which clothes, and some of the jewels which adorn this false courtesan. But first we will consider the golden cup which she holds in her hand, and with which she intoxicates the peoples of the earth.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 17:1-6a

17 And one from among the seven messengers who have the seven bowls came, and he talks with me, saying: "*Hither!* I shall be showing you the sentence of the great prostitute who is sitting on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth commit prostitution, and those dwelling in the earth are made drunk with the wine of her prostitution." ³And he carries me away, in spirit, into a wilderness. And I perceived a woman sitting on a scarlet wild beast, replete with blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴And the woman was clothed with purple and scarlet, and gilded with gold and precious stone[s] and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, brimming with the abominations and uncleannesses of the prostitution of her and the earth. ⁵And on her forehead is written a name:

SECRET
BABYLON THE GREAT
THE MOTHER OF THE PROSTITUTES
AND THE ABOMINATIONS
OF THE EARTH

⁶And I perceived the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus.

THE GOLDEN CUP

THE influence of great Babylon over the peoples of the earth is figured by a golden cup, which she holds in her hand, brimming with the abominations and uncleannesses of the prostitution of her and the earth. Its wine makes them drunk. These simple statements are tremendously suggestive, once we allow ourselves to ponder their import. They can mean nothing less than that the whole world is becoming intoxicated and the beverage is supplied by Babylon. We shall endeavor to show that this is actually true, and that the illicit liquor is already being served, so that the nations are staggering in a drunken debauch (Un. 17:4).

At the very same time that this furious wine is being swallowed by the peoples, the most intense and successful temperance and prohibition propaganda that the world has ever seen is being staged. The United States actually incorporated the prohibition of intoxicating liquors in its constitution, so that it seemed impossible to repeal it. Surely the world is getting sober! Yet even the world allows that, apart from the lawless use of intoxicating drinks, all society seems to be on a spree. It is characterized by the swaggering braggadocio of the inebriate. It is pleasure mad in the very place where it is supposed to be sobered by constraint of law.

About one of every one hundred fifty of earth's population is a Jew. Yet there are not wanting those who have carefully considered the matter who insist that this small minority has as much influence in mundane affairs

as all the rest put together. As most of the Jews have no personal influence on the world outside their own environment, this leaves a small group of the race with powers for good or evil unexampled in human history.

Jewish genius has often been descanted upon. The annals of the arts and sciences, of politics and finance, contain many a noted name from among God's ancient people, which proves them to be equal, if not superior, in mental vigor, to the other peoples of the earth. Until modern times their powers, except in the realms of finance, seem to have been consecrated to the better things of life. Now almost every talent they possess is being prostituted to the greed for gold. They already hold the golden cup of Babylon. It, however, holds none of the wine that cheers the heart of God and man, but a fearful mixture that debases and demoralizes all who drink its devastating dregs.

The wandering Jew has been compelled to worship money. It seemed his only hope, his sole defense. Often forced to flee for his life, he lost all the holdings that he left behind. But with movable wealth he could reëstablish himself in another land. This led to the invention of further facilities for the conveyance of money, such as underlie our present banking systems. He can be immensely wealthy, yet have nothing which his enemies can seize. His foreign credits may be shifted to suit his plans. Even the poor Jews of Europe, who supposedly lost all, were able to find passage money and capital in order to emigrate to America, in numbers altogether out of proportion to their part of the population.

For centuries the Jews have realized the power of wealth, and have been the recourse of kings and governments in financial straits, and have associated themselves to take advantage of the financial position which they held. This is especially true in Europe, where a single family held the purse strings of nations. The

facility by which money might be obtained by the issuance of bonds, such as the Jews demanded as security, has led to the most flagrant financial debauches. Once war was impossible without money. All that is needed now is a few scraps of paper and any nation will mortgage its manhood to win a war. This has led to the financial collapse which still affects the currencies of practically the entire world.

Many years ago a friend, who had traveled all over Europe, told me that almost all of the questionable pleasures as well as the vices of the continent were contributing to the increasing opulence of the Jews, who were largely in control of such business, for it was the quickest way to wealth. I have since been in a position to verify this statement, and my impression that the same was true in the United States has been amply attested by the increasing prominence of Jewish leaders in all lines of amusement, and by the slough of immorality into which many forms of diversion have sunk.

Two things have gone together in the national pastimes of the nation—Jewish control and corruption. The theater was none too moral, but it has degenerated so that I understand a decent play is seldom considered. If one succeeds, it is held up as a remarkable example. The movie menace has led to many censorship, but it cannot be controlled. The popular music is such a feeble minded and corrupt concoction that it dies of its own degeneracy and makes room for the next obscene “hit”—and more money in the publishers’ pockets. Even baseball is suffering from the unfair methods of Jewish gamblers who bribed the players to lose the game so that they would win large sums of money.

As the time has not yet arrived for the open manifestation of Babylon, it is not incumbent on us to prove that the Jews already control the wealth of the world and are now debauching the peoples. All we need to show is the tendency in that direction. Yet, it seems to

us that this has gone so far that there is no better representation of Jewish activities possible today than that here given. The golden goblet, brimming with drugged liquor, is even now in the hands of Babylon, and the nations are quaffing with gusto of the distracting draught. But the worst is yet to come.

To substantiate the interpretation that apostate Israel has a golden cup which intoxicates the nations, we must show that they control the finances of the world, and, through them, provide pleasures and amusements which corrupt and debase the people. Most of us are aware that there is enormous wealth in the hands of the Jews, for this has been the case for centuries. But few know of the marvelous financial organization which, even in the Middle Ages, controlled the money market of Europe. Governments went to them for funds even at that time. Today this financial system is not confined to one continent, but embraces the whole world. International banking is under full control of Jewish financiers. It is said that at one time the head of the house of Rothschild prevented war between two countries by simply refusing to lend money to the two belligerents.

The debtor is the servant of the lender, even if it be a nation. If a government owes another nation it is not free to do aught which that nation would disapprove. So also with the Jews, for they are, for all practical purposes, an international nation. The country which owes them huge sums dares not disoblige them. In these days money has more power in politics than any other force, and it must not be offended. No one knows how deeply indebted modern nations are to these international bankers, but all are agreed that they exercise an enormous control, and, if they should openly pool their interests, as they will do when they establish their headquarters in Babylon, they would immediately become the paramount political as well as financial power in the world.

The following is quoted from D'Israeli, who probably had many facts on which to found his fictions. This was written many years ago.

"You never observe a great intellectual movement in Europe in which the Jews do not greatly participate. The first Jesuits were Jews; that mysterious Russian diplomacy, which so alarms Western Europe, is organized and principally carried on by Jews; that mighty revolution, which is at this moment preparing in Germany, and which will be, in fact, a second and greater Reformation, and of which so little is as yet known in England, is entirely developing under the auspices of Jews, who almost monopolize the professorial chairs of Germany. Neander, the founder of spiritual Christianity, and who is Regius Professor in the University of Berlin, is a Jew. Benary, equally famous in the same university, is a Jew. I think there are more than ten professors in this university who are Jews.

"A few years back we were applied to by Russia. I resolved to go myself to St. Petersburg. I had, on my arrival, an interview with the Russian minister of finance, Count Cancrin: I beheld the son of a Lithuanian Jew. The loan was connected with the affairs of Spain. I resolved on repairing to Spain from Russia. I travelled without intermission. I had an audience immediately on my arrival with the Spanish minister, Señor Mendizabel: I beheld one, like myself, the son of a Nuovo Cristiano, a Jew of Arragon. In consequence of what transpired at Madrid, I went straight to Paris to consult the president of the French council: I behold the son of a French Jew, a hero, an imperial marshal, and very properly so, for who should be military heroes if not those who worship the Lord of Hosts?

"And is Soult a Hebrew?

"Yes; and several of the French marshals, and the most famous—Massena, for example; his real name was

Manasseh: but to my anecdote. The consequence of our consultation was, that some northern power should be applied to in a friendly and mediative capacity. We fixed on Prussia, and the president of the council made an application to the Prussian minister, who attended a few days after our conference. Count Arnim entered the cabinet, and I beheld a Prussian Jew. So you see, my dear Coningsby, that the world is governed by very different personages to what is imagined by those who are not behind the scenes . . .”

Though this is fiction, the fact that it could be written so long ago by a Jew high in the counsels of the nations lends it great weight. In the light of later developments it is almost a prophecy. This is the beginning of great Babylon and her sovereignty over the kings of the earth. Apostate Israel is grasping imperial power and economic sovereignty.

While the Jews have yet few of the outward signs of nationality, they are a far more homogeneous unit than many a nation with a government and territory of its own. The ties of blood and religion are far stronger than any political bonds can ever be. What a striking contrast there is between India and the Jews! The natives of India are bound together by a common government, but divided by caste and religion. Though they are all together in one land they have little power or influence, even in their own government. The Jews are scattered everywhere. They have no king and no priest, their numbers are only a small fraction of India's millions, yet they are united as no other nation ever was, despite their internal factions, and have a greater influence on world affairs than any other nation of modern times.

The Jew holds a controlling interest in some lines of business which are quite legitimate. It is said that most of the meat packing and shoemaking, as well as clothing manufacture in the United States is in their hands. But

they not only lead, but dominate and control the tobacco, the theatrical, and the moving picture industries, and have a strangle hold on the newspapers and magazines of the whole country. It is said that the publication that exposes them is doomed, no matter how much wealth there is behind it. One notable effort was made, and the publication is now suspended.

The Jew has learned that more money can be made in pandering to the impure impulses of the gentiles than in any other way. His craving for gold leads him to become a channel of corruption to them instead of a means of blessing, as God purposed, and as will be the case in the eons to come. The gentiles' lust for pleasure is the most profitable field for Jewish speculation. The sanctity of wealth is now recognized in all courts and among all nations. This protects them from the terrible losses they once sustained. The power of wealth overrides all else. Laws, police, courts, all cringe before it. The way is clear for Babylon to usurp the economic crown of all the earth.

Even though I know practically nothing about the theatrical business, I am quite sure that it is under exclusively Jewish control. There may be exceptions, but they are too few to affect the issue. Producing, booking, operating, all is in their hands. And from all that I have read of the theatrical situation, the moral degeneration of the theater, under Jewish domination, has been so sickening that even decent people of the world, without any religious bias, are disgusted. Laws are passed against indecent exhibitions. They are denounced in the newspapers (which makes the best of advertising), the actors are arrested, but there is no cessation to the flood of foul plays.

At the moment that this is written the people of one large city find themselves quite helpless. Illegal shows are being given in the heart of the business section. Preachers are denouncing, business men are offering

resolutions, people are protesting, the newspapers are exposing, the police are arresting, the producers are giving bail, the lawyers and the judges are "arranging", and the shows are prospering. There is enough sinister influence to defy the laws, and all the moral forces in the city. The nations cannot resist even the dregs of the wine offered by the false woman.

As I have never seen a "movie", I must rely on the reports of others as to their quality. As I live where most of them are made, I need no assurance that, as an industry, it is quite as much under the domination of the Jews as the theater. I do not see why there should be anything wrong in a moving picture, as such, any more than in a book of views. But from the titles, the printed pictures, the criticism and the continual agitation for censorship, it is evident that this has become the most potent means of debauching the minds and morals of the people that has ever been invented. And this is in the hands of that people who are to teach the nations holiness!

Another field which has been almost totally captured by the Jews is music. No song can hope to succeed or become popular unless it is published by them. Most of the so-called "hits", which are sold by the millions, and sung everywhere, are also written by them. Anyone of mature years cannot but be struck by the deterioration in the quality of popular songs since they have come into control. Two or three decades ago they were at least decent in their sentimentality. Now, I am told, they are often maudlin, and would not be sung if the people had not been prepared for such slush by gradual debasement.

These are gross methods of corruption. A much more insidious and subtle control is exercised over the minds of men through Jewish control of the press. It is not that they necessarily own all the newspapers and magazines, but they dominate the field. Perhaps the principle on which this is based will be clear from an instance

which came under my observation many years ago, before anyone had perceived what power they wielded. The largest department store in a city made an advertising contract for a whole year with the principal daily paper. It was loudly heralded as the largest deal of its kind up to that time. I do not suppose that the contract said a word about such matters, but it was made clear to all the newspaper force that nothing derogatory to the store or to a Jew, as such, would be allowed in its columns. Propaganda in their favor was welcome. The Jews practically controlled that paper by means of one advertising contract.

Perhaps only the Jews themselves realize the tremendous influence of the press. It is said that Baron Montefiore gave vent to the following expostulation: "What are you prating about? As long as we do not have the press of the entire world in our hands, everything you may do is vain. We must control or influence the papers of the whole world in order to blind and deceive the people." The last clause is the important one for our purpose. If the Jews wished to control all literary effort in order to enlighten and bless the people, we would begin to think the millennium had come. But they have no such aim. They are holding the golden goblet to the lips of the people, that they may become fuddled by the wine of her propaganda.

ROME NOT BABYLON

I am well aware that the Roman hierarchy is usually supposed to be figured by this woman, and the cup and its contents are taken to be the doctrines which she inculcates. I oppose popery and its empty ritualism as much as anyone. Mariolatry I abhor. Yet I do not shut my eyes to ritual and mummary in the Greek church and in some Protestant communions. Nor do I wink at the equally destructive rationalism, flooding other Christian denominations, of which the Roman and Greek churches

were never guilty. I have no brief for any of these, and doubt not that God will deal with them as they deserve. But they are not Babylon. If I twist the Scriptures to smite them I also am guilty of a capital crime and must answer to my Lord for distorting His Word.

The temporal sovereignty of Rome (recently restored) once gave her a place somewhat like that of great Babylon, for she claimed to be the suzerain of all Christian kings. She undoubtedly still has much political power through the number of her adherents. But, even in professedly Catholic countries, she has lost her supremacy. Recent events in Mexico, which, I believe, is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, show that she is losing, rather than gaining in political influence. Her sphere is limited. Outside of so-called Christian countries she has no place. But the Jew is everywhere. He has more to say than the pope, in financial and governmental affairs, even in those countries which acknowledge the spiritual sovereignty of Rome.

The petulant impulse which urges every new division among Protestants to hurl the epithet "Babylon" at all its enemies, Evangelical or Catholic, shows a lamentable lack of reverence for God's revelation. It is not intended to be twisted into a whip for anyone whom we wish to castigate, but to reveal God's dealings with His people and with mankind. It is always possible to force some semblance of likeness between His enemies and ours, but that does not give us license to distort the Scriptures to make them fit, or ignore them when they do not suit. Babylon is a great commercial metropolis, as well as a spiritual source of corruption to all mankind. Neither was ever true of Rome.

Before using the cry "come out of her, My people" (18:4), in a sense derogatory to our spiritual opponents, let us calmly consider the whole of the chapter, with its merchandise and ships, its opulence and power. We may succeed in spiritualizing parts of it, but not all.

Most of it must remain a misfit if we apply it to anyone but the apostate people of Jehovah, in their final struggle for world supremacy apart from their Messiah. This is the only satisfactory interpretation which fits without forcing, and needs no "spiritualizing" to make it suit the circumstances.

Babylon has not yet reached the stage which is shown in the vision. Yet even now, with less than one per cent of the earth's population, how often do we meet with a member of the race among the mighty! Not only in Russia, among the radicals, but in the world councils following the great war, they are not only present but powerful. I venture to say that they largely controlled the business side of the war, and received greater consideration at the close of hostilities than any of the belligerents. The conflict "to make the world safe for democracy" has not only bred a dictator in many countries, but has immensely increased the power and prestige of an international dictator of whom few are yet aware.

What of the future of this golden kingdom? We are not prophets, nor do we wish to add a single letter to what has been written, yet there is one phase of this queen's career which seems clearly revealed. At present she does not realize her power. It is too diffused to show its strength. When she appears on the pages of prophecy there has been a grand combine, a "pool", our financial friends would call it, a concentration of all Jewish wealth and control, with headquarters in Babylon. The ancient world capital will be rebuilt with a magnificence the world has never seen. It will be the commercial and economic capital of the world.

All the gold that is dug from the bowels of the earth will not suffice to pay the interest on its bonds. Nations will be impoverished to provide it with luxuries. So heavy and insupportable will be the load of debt that the principal cannot be repaid. The Jew will have a first

mortgage on the earth. We can readily imagine the hatred which this will engender. The gentiles have never found it hard to hate the Jew. They have never had so much cause as when, in that day, they will be their virtual vassals. Hence they eagerly hail the plan of their great leader, which is not simply a repudiation of their debt, but the destruction of their creditor. Great Babylon will fall, a victim of its own greed, hated and abhorred by both man and God.

This exposition is not written to blame the Jew, as though each one were individually responsible for a grand conspiracy against the rest of mankind. Indeed, I believe that he cannot help himself, if he would. God has predestined that nation for world dominance, not merely in the sense of promising it to them, or preparing them by His discipline, but by incorporating into their very being the qualifications for leadership, which are not altogether submerged by their apostasy. This fragment of fitness urges him, as an individual and as a race, to seek that high place which is rightfully his, if he would only himself submit to the greatest Jew of all—the Messiah Jesus.

As an example let me compare the official careers of Disraeli and Gladstone, though I can only repeat what I have heard from those who held Gladstone in highest esteem as a man and a saint. I am told that his very goodness and greatness made his government impractical for this evil eon. Disraeli, however, was a most capable and practical administrator, notwithstanding his lack of much which was admired in Gladstone. This man, with the very name of Israel (D'Israel-i), even in apostasy, gave a glimpse of what we may expect of the nation in their restoration.

We should not be surprised at their capacity to dominate, for they are of the race of Joseph and Daniel and Messiah, according to the flesh. Perhaps we should not be astonished at the utter sinfulness and sensuality

of their methods, since they are alienated from the life of God and rejectors of their Saviour. But we cannot help marveling, as John did, at the magnitude and magnificence of their success in subjugating the nations and establishing a super-kingdom to which all other sovereignties must pay a golden tribute. At its present stage it is already the greatest political and economic marvel of this earth's history.

Students of prophecy have long known that the geographic center of God's unfoldings is Jerusalem, not Rome, or London, or New York, or Constantinople, or Peking, or Tokio. We acknowledge this in our division into eastern and western beasts. Longitude, in the Scriptures, is not based on Greenwich, England, but on the sacred city where God's glory was once displayed. So also they must learn that the central people of prophecy is Israel or the Jews, not some heterogeneous division of Christianity, of which neither prophet nor apostle had any inkling. At the time of the end Israel occupies the center of the stage. All the action revolves about the nation of promise. All the judgments are related to them. They either establish the supremacy of the faithful or destroy the supremacy of the apostates. Let us fix one eye on Jerusalem and the other on the Jews if we wish to follow the premonitory footfalls of Jehovah, as He prepares for the coming eon.

What a luminous light this casts upon our times! We sometimes wonder if the world has gone insane in its mad pursuit of pelf and power and pleasure, but now we know that it is merely drunk. Let us hope that this is a sign that our time is short, and that Babylon's brief reign on the back of the wild beast is very near, to be followed by the advent of Christ Himself, for we have an appointment to meet our Lord before these dark days, and shall view the tragedy of false Babylon while in His very presence.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 17:6b-17

And perceiving her, I marvel at the great marvel. ⁷And the messenger said to me: "Why do you marvel? *I* shall be declaring to you the secret of the woman and of the wild beast which is bearing her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. ⁸The wild beast which you perceived was, and is not, and is about to be ascending out of the abyss, and to be going away into destruction. And those dwelling on the earth whose names are not written on the scroll of life from the disruption of the world, will be marveling, observing the wild beast, seeing that it was, and is not, and will be present.

⁹Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains where the woman is sitting on them, ¹⁰and they are seven kings. Five fall, one is, the other came not as yet: and whenever he may be coming, he must remain briefly. ¹¹And the wild beast which was, and is not, *it* is the eighth, also, and is from among the seven, and is departing into destruction.

¹²And the ten horns which you perceived are ten kings—those who obtained no kingdom as yet, but are obtaining authority as kings at one hour with the wild beast. ¹³These have one opinion, and they are giving their power and authority to the wild beast. ¹⁴These will be battling with the Lambkin, and the Lambkin will be conquering them, seeing that He is Lord of lords and King of kings and those with Him are called and chosen and faithful."

¹⁵And he is saying to me, "These waters which you perceived, where the prostitute is sitting, are peoples and throngs and nations and languages. ¹⁶And the ten horns which you perceived, and the wild beast, these will be hating the prostitute, and they will be making her desolate and naked, and they will be eating her flesh, and they will be burning her up with fire, ¹⁷for God imparts to their hearts to form His opinion, and to form one opinion, and to give their kingdom to the wild beast, until God's words will be accomplished.

THE GREAT ENIGMA

BESIDES the secret of the woman and of the wild beast, we are called upon to solve one of the most enigmatical statements in the Scriptures. "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains where the woman is sitting on them, and they are seven kings. Five fall, one is, the other came not as yet: and whenever he may be coming, he must remain briefly. And the wild beast which was, and is not, *it* is the eighth, also, and is from among the seven, and is departing into destruction" (17:9-11). If it were in any other book, or any other setting, we would be strongly tempted to criticize the mixed metaphors, incongruously piled one upon another. It is the only passage that has come within our ken where one figure is explained by another. The heads of the beast are certainly figures of literal kings. But we are assured that they are also *mountains*, and these are not literal. This is evidently intentional, for it is introduced by the somewhat startling challenge, "Here is the mind which has wisdom" (17:9).

First we are told that "the seven heads are seven mountains", then "they are seven kings". Some have suggested that these kings are not identical with the mountains, hence it should be rendered, "and *there are* seven kings," as in the Authorized Version. But it is always dangerous to make the translation fit an interpretation, and there seems no grammatical reason for the suggestion. The presence of *and* coördinates the two

statements. Literally it reads, as in the sublinear of the Concordant Version, THE SEVEN HEADS SEVEN mountains ARE . . . AND KINGS SEVEN [THEY] ARE. In Greek, the literal statement that there are seven kings would not use the word THEY-ARE. The fact that this is inserted shows that the kings are the interpretation of the seven heads.

To solve the riddle we must face all the facts. There is an evident effort here to give two distinct, yet consistent, interpretations of the seven heads. *Only one of these is used to indicate to us the great chronological crisis* when the woman is presented to our view. We are told about the various kings, and their rise and fall. Before this, however, we are told that the heads are mountains—immovable, steadfast eminences in the earth.

Contrary to all rules we are forced to take the mountains here as symbolic. In the Scriptures they are used as figures of ruling powers. Rome was characterized by our Lord when He spoke cryptically concerning the moving of a mountain by faith. He really referred to the removal of Roman rule (Mat. 17:20). The transformation took place on a mountain top. The millennial kingdom was again revealed on a mountain at the close of the kingdom account (Mat. 28:16). The new Jerusalem is on a mountain (Un. 21:10).

The seven mountains are evidently seven stable governments. The curious phrase “where the woman is sitting on them” confirms this. The woman is supported and upheld by well established powers. She is not dependent on the shifting tides of politics or the changing fortunes of rulers. Kings come and go, but she goes on forever. She seems secure, settled, untroubled by the turmoil of the times. This is the needed background for the sudden revolutionary change which seals her doom. The whole purport of this passage is to paint great Babylon at the pinnacle of her prosperity, for this immediately precedes her destruction.

When John marveled marvelously at the sight of the woman on the scarlet colored wild beast, the messenger came to him and explained the secret by carefully defining the period of time in which the vision is placed. It culminates in the era immediately preceding the ascent of the wild beast from the abyss. "The wild beast . . . was, and *is not*, and is about to be ascending out of the abyss" (17:8). In other words, the woman holds her imperial sway during the great confederacy of the end time, until one of its heads receives the death blow (13:3), and attains her greatest power during the interval when the wild beast is in the abyss.

The necessity for this is apparent when we note that the previous section deals with the wild beast *after* the death blow was cured, and it emerges out of the sea (13:1-3). Babylon's splendor is associated with the time *previous* to the judgment period already considered, when the faithful in the nation are persecuted by the wild beast after Satan gave him his throne. To understand great Babylon aright we must fix our attention on the crisis in her career, when the wild beast *is not*, for before this it is her patron, afterward it is her persecutor.

The difference between the seven mountains and the seven kings is this: One represents the seven stable politico-religious powers which compose the wild beast during its whole history. The seven kings are the rulers of these powers at any given time. Babylon's position on the mountains will be secure, settled, safe. It will be based on an economic foundation which is not affected by political changes. The nations cannot cancel their debts by choosing a new head. The overlordship of Babylon survives all governmental vacillations.

Perhaps at no time does her suzerainty seem more serene than at the crisis in which she comes before us. Indeed, hers is the only stable sovereignty, in a world seething with unrest. Even the great world empire is

temporarily destroyed. Its head is assassinated. Five of its kings fall. Only one remains, but he is evidently unable to govern the whole. Another has a brief reign. The world empire is not identified with him but with the head which *is not*. He, as well as the confederacy which he heads, is "the wild beast".

The seven heads are representative of the seven stable political powers which compose the wild beast during its whole history, and also stand for the particular individuals who are at the head of each at this particular juncture. We are told that the whole wild beast was in the abyss. The whole came up from the sea. This evidently refers to the confederacy. Yet our attention is immediately called to one of the heads, and this individual practically becomes the wild beast himself, for he is given all the authority which it wields.

After the introductory conflict of the end time, which transforms Daniel's four beasts into the single monster of the Unveiling, there seems to be still another struggle for supremacy among the seven heads. This appears to be the situation presented to us in the words, "Five fall, one is, the other came not as yet: and whenever he may be coming, he must remain briefly. And the wild beast which was, and is not, *it* is the eighth, also, and is from among the seven, and is departing into destruction" (17:10-11).

All seven are first accounted for, before the eighth, who is one of the seven restored, comes back from the abyss to deal out to Babylon the doom that it deserves. Five fall. The eighth is probably one of these. In the interim only one seems to have regal powers at first, followed by another of brief duration. When the eighth arises he is so supreme that he is the sovereign dictator of all and is the wild beast personified.

But why are these details presented in this place? We are considering the career of Babylon, not of the wild beast. It is more than likely that Babylon is at the

bottom of all these political upheavals. She has a kingdom over the kings of the earth. Why should she not cause the fall of the five kings? It would not be at all strange if she should be responsible for the assassination of the one who reappears as the eighth head.

Can we not see beneath all this the sinister machinations of a master mind? Babylon possesses far more power than any of the kings of the earth. Her influence is paramount in mundane politics. She is the indirect ruler of the world. Why not take the reins directly in her own hands? Why not have her own man at the head of all earthly sovereignty? Was it not promised them in the ancient prophets? But how are they to go about it? By simply setting in motion such influences as will cause the downfall of all except the one who will be her tool. "Five fall. One is." While we are not told why they fell, we are advised of the fact in a description of Babylon. God does not wander from His subject. They probably fell because Babylon wished to rise.

We are not told directly which one of the seven heads the wild beast is. We have seen that six of the heads are eastern and one western, and that the western head has ten horns. This probably is composed of confederate Christendom. When he returns to power, it seems that the ten kings take office at the same time, as his vassals, so that he becomes the acknowledged leader of the great military league which had conquered the east, and, as such, he dominates the world, the first supreme suzerain since Alexander.

Babylon's plan of concentrating all power in the hands of one man will thus be fulfilled, but with a fatal defect. This man, when he emerges from the abyss, obsessed by Satan, has plans of his own, and will not further her ambitious designs. On the contrary, he is her worst enemy. Perhaps he knows that these Jews were responsible for his fall. He realizes how unpopular they have become in the western countries, whence an

enormous part of the wealth produced flows into their coffers, and taxes are largely a tribute to their financial position.

It therefore appears most probable that Babylon, not content with the virtual control of mankind by means of her wealth, and even of politics by means of her influence, desires to attain that goal to which their ancient prophets have all pointed, the actual, political suzerainty of the world. They want a Jewish messiah to take the helm. And when was the time so propitious for such a move? Such a world emperor needs money most of all, for with it all else can be bought. In the early centuries the Jews had neither wealth nor influence. Today they are a great international force. In that future day they will be the paramount factor in finance and in commerce, and in control of all except the actual government of the nations. Why not grasp that also?

How will they go about it? How did Jewish agitators, in and after the world war, without much money or influence, seize control of some of the governments of Europe? By the fall of the existing rulers, through well-planned plots and propaganda. With the press of the world in their power, and the politicians of the world in their pay, the Jews of the end time will be the king makers and the king crushers of the world. If they propose to be rid of the kings and rule the world by their own messiah, they will have the money, the machinery, and the men to do it. It will not be a crude contest of arms, but a war in which wealth and wits will win.

As a result, these five kings fall. It is not said that they are assassinated, necessarily, though one seems to have received the fatal sword wound. They lose their place as heads of the wild beast. Only one remains. Probably he is the one chosen to head their messianic kingdom. Another, who comes up later, has but a brief career. The fact that we are told all of this in connection with Babylon's sovereignty must mean that she is the power

which dethrones and sets up kings, as Israel's real Messiah will do in the millennium. So it is until the abyss opens up and disgorges the eighth head, who had been one of the seven.

All of the horns of the wild beast were on one of the seven heads, which we have identified with Christendom and its ten military powers. This head was originally the nondescript monstrosity of Daniel's prophecy, which conquered the eastern beasts, and absorbed them, forming the seven-headed, ten-horned monster of the Unveiling. It seems probable that the eighth head had been the head of Christendom, the head with ten horns, and, when he reappears, he not only takes the place of all the heads, but is the special king of the western military league.

The ten horns will hate the woman. At first glance it may seem singular that these should have a special dislike for Babylon. But a little reflection will show that there will be good cause for this hatred. "Christians" (not the true believers in Christ, but the apostate religionists) have always hated and persecuted the Jews. None of the other religions have been so bitter against them. But that is only a part of the cause which leads to such a terrible pogrom, in which Babylon and all its glory and power are utterly destroyed.

It takes much money to wage wars. There is only one way in which the coming wars, such as fill the prophetic horizon, can be financed. The nations must bond all their resources, and mortgage their manhood and their future. Since the horns are military powers, they will be the ones who will feel the burden of war debts most keenly. The great bulk of these bonds will fall into the hands of Babylon. The Jews will have a mortgage on Christendom. The principal will be so great that there is no possibility of paying it. The interest will be so heavy that it will enslave the nations who owe it.

Something of this can be seen today in the nations

principally engaged in the world war. Germany was virtually a vassal under her enormous reparations payments. It is difficult to feel kindly toward those to whom a nation pays such colossal sums. The other European nations are far more free in their resentment at their obligations. The fact that the United States spent billions to help them does not hinder ill-feeling because they owe such huge sums to their ally across the sea.

The problem presented by the post-war period was a vast one. Rehabilitation has proceeded rapidly. Currencies were once stabilized. But the greatest task is the settlement of debts and indemnities. This huge undertaking may consume many, many years, even in the richest of the belligerent nations. A similar situation will confront the western military powers after the far greater conflict of the future. They will be victorious but impoverished. The paramount problem to be solved by the great emperor of that day will be this financial incubus, which will make the victorious west virtual vassals of a Jewish combine in Babylon. To meet the interest is an unbearable burden. To pay the principal is impossible. Shall the conquerors of the world submit to perpetual slavery?

Stories are told of the old Jewish ghettos with their money lenders and the perils which came to them through the hatred of their creditors. One is especially fresh in my mind. A reckless young gentile became deeply in debt to a Jewish banker of one of the independent towns of Germany. As he had no means to pay what he owed, he conceived the diabolical plot of accusing the Jews of treason, thus ridding himself of his obligations by destroying his creditor. The town was at war with another at the time, so the feelings of the populace were easily roused. If his plotting had not been overheard, the whole Jewish population of the city would have been massacred and the ghetto destroyed.

The eighth head has a similar plan for solving this

financial dilemma. Alexander could not untie the Gordian knot, so his sword severed it. The western military powers cannot pay the Babylonian bankers, but they can destroy them. So popular is this plan that their ten kings, with one accord, approve of it, and give their power and authority to the wild beast. So it is that "the ten horns . . . and the wild beast, these will be hating the prostitute, and they will be making her desolate and naked, and they will be eating her flesh, and they will be burning her up with fire, for God imparts to their hearts to form His opinion, and to form one opinion, and to give their kingdom to the wild beast, until God's words will be accomplished" (17:16-17).

The solution of the great enigma lies in the distinction between the settled economic substructure of government on which the Jews will found their future financial domination of the world, which is figured by seven mountains, representing the seven stable subdivisions of the world federation, and the transitory political rulers, who fall and rise, and who are, to a large extent, under their influence. But, when one arises from the abyss, obsessed by Satan, God uses him to deal with Babylon as she deserves. The apostate, money-worshipping Jews meet a combination which is too strong for them. God imparts His opinion to Satan and the wild beast and the ten horns. All the powers of evil are marshaled by the powers of good to wipe false Babylon from the face of the earth.

Since the above was written the writer has visited the site of ancient Babylon. Instead of a population of ten thousand in the city of Hillah, as reported under Turkish rule, he found about forty thousand living on the site. Since then it has been the center of continual activity and growth. Enormous sums are being invested in this part of the world to restore irrigation systems, so that vast tracts of land may be returned to cultivation. Many millions have been invested in oil fields and in a pipe

line to convey the oil across the Damascus desert to harbors on the Mediterranean. More significant still is the survey of a railway which is to continue the present line from Haifa past the lake of Galilee clear across the desert to Babylon. This will bring Palestine and the Jews who are gathering there into close contact with Babylon, and facilitate the future exodus out of the Promised Land into the land of Shinar, as foretold in the vision of the Ephah (Zech. 5:5-11).

The Concordant Version

CHAPTERS 17:18-19:5

¹⁸And the woman whom you perceived is the great city which has a kingdom over the kings of the earth."

18 After these things I perceived another messenger descending out of heaven, having great authority. And the earth is illuminated by his glory. ²And he cries with a strong voice, saying, "*It falls! It falls! Babylon the great—and became the dwelling place of demons and a jail of every unclean spirit and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird,* ³*seeing that all nations have fallen as a result of the furious wine of her prostitution. And the kings of the earth commit prostitution with her and the merchants of the earth are rich as a result of her ability to indulge.*"

⁴And I hear another voice out of heaven, saying, "Come out of her, My people, lest you should be participating in her sins, and lest you should be getting her calamities, ⁵seeing that her sins are piled up to heaven, and God remembers her injuries.

⁶Be paying as she also pays and double the doubles, in accord with her acts. In her cup in which she blends, blend double for her. ⁷As much as she glorifies herself and indulges, so much torment and mourning be giving her, seeing that she is saying in her heart, 'I am sitting a queen, and am no widow, and mourning I may never see.' ⁸Therefore in one day her calamities will be arriving—death and mourning and famine—and she shall be burned up with fire, seeing that strong is the Lord God Who is judging her.

⁹And the kings of the earth who commit prostitution and indulge with her will be lamenting and grieving over her whenever they may be observing the smoke of her conflagration, ¹⁰standing afar off because of the fear of her torment, saying, "*Woe! Woe! that great city! Babylon, the strong city! seeing that in one hour your judgment came.*"

¹¹And the merchants of the earth are lamenting and mourning over her, seeing that no one is buying their cargo any more—¹²a cargo of gold, and silver, and precious stone[s], and pearls, and cambric, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and every kind of citron wood, and every ivory utensil, and every utensil of the most valuable wood, and of copper, and of iron, and marble, ¹³and cinnamon, and ginger, and incense, and attar, and frankincense, and wine, and olive oil, and flour, and grain, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and coaches, and bodies, and human souls. ¹⁴"And the fruition for which your soul yearned passed away from you, and all that is sumptuous and splendid perished from you, and they will be finding them nevermore." ¹⁵The merchants of these things who are rich

The Concordant Version

through her will be standing afar off because of the fear of her torment, lamenting and mourning, ¹⁶ saying, "Woe! Woe! the great city was clothed in cambric and purple and scarlet, and gilded with gold and precious stone[s] and pearl, ¹⁷ seeing that in one hour so much riches were desolated."

And every navigator, and every one who is sailing to the place, and mariners and as many as are working on the sea, stand afar off, ¹⁸ and, observing the smoke of her conflagration, they cried, saying, "Is there any like the great city?" ¹⁹ And they cast soil on their heads, and cried, lamenting and mourning, saying, "Woe! woe! the great city, by which all who have ships on the sea are rich, as a result of its preciousness, seeing that, in one hour, it was desolated."

²⁰ Make merry over her, O heaven, and ye saints and apostles and prophets, seeing that God passes your sentence upon her.

²¹ And one strong messenger lifts a stone, as large as a millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying that "Thus Babylon, the great city, will be hurled down, and she may be found in her nevermore. ²² And the sound of the lyre singers and entertainers, and flutists and trumpeters shall be heard in you nevermore; and every artisan of every trade may be found in you nevermore; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard in you nevermore; ²³ and the light of a lamp may be appearing in you nevermore; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride shall be heard in you nevermore; seeing that your merchants were the magnates of the earth, seeing that by your enchantment all nations were deceived."

²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth.

19 After these things I hear as it were the loud voice of a vast throng in heaven, saying, "*Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power is of our God, ² for true and just are His judgments, for He judges the great prostitute who corrupts the earth with her prostitution, and avenges the blood of His slaves at her hand.*" ³ And a second time have they declared, "*Hallelujah!*" And her smoke is ascending for the eons of the eons.

⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four animals fall and worship God, Who is sitting on the throne, saying, "*Amen! Hallelujah!*" ⁵ And a voice came out from the throne, saying, "Be praising our God, all His slaves, and those who are fearing Him, small and great."

THE COMMERCIAL CAPITAL OF THE FUTURE

COMMERCE controls the modern world. The trader now outranks the politician. Wars are waged for traffic lanes and economic concessions. The policies of cabinets are dictated by the merchants of great cities. Once international commerce, as well as international finance, is brought into one great controlling combine, it will usurp the major functions of all government and will have "a kingdom over the kings of the earth". This is the place accorded to the great city Babylon, at the time of the end (Un. 17:18). The description of Babylon is most "modern" in its implications. Rome was a military dictatorship. Commerce was not developed. Men needed little but what was at hand. Today the civilized nations draw their supplies from the whole world. Transportation is nearly as important as production. Commerce and capital are kings.

How anyone can read the eighteenth chapter of the Unveiling and fail to see that it portrays the destruction of a literal commercial metropolis passes comprehension. Any attempt to spiritualize such things as gold and silver and precious stones and pearls must recognize their true worth. These substances are symbols of the highest and most glorious spiritual values. If Babylon is the apostate church, it is represented as richly and lavishly endowed with the very graces which deny its apostasy. Literal gold and silver and precious stones to deck the persons of the opulent fits the picture perfectly. It is evidence of the false millennial bliss enjoyed by apostate Israel be-

fore Christ comes. Faith, not ingenuity, is needed to see this.

There is already intense rivalry between the great cities of the world to gain commercial supremacy. All realize the necessity of having access to the open sea. Even cities far inland are planning to cut a way for ocean commerce to their doors. Chicago is trying to connect with the gulf of Mexico by way of the Mississippi, and with the Atlantic through the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence. Indeed, almost all great ports are inland or artificial. Many millions have been spent and many more will be used to convert the open roadstead of San Pedro into the modern harbor of Los Angeles. Though situated on the fringe of western civilization and separated by a vast ocean from the Orient, and notwithstanding there are much better natural harbors to the north and south, the artificial basins have contributed largely to the creation of one of the great cities of the world where once was little more than a desert.

The suddenness with which this has come about may help us to visualize the rapid rise of Babylon. When I first arrived in Los Angeles, not much more than four decades ago, it was a sleepy Mexican village of twelve thousand people—one-fourth the population of present-day Babylon. It has increased more than a hundred-fold. Each year has added an average of more than three times its former population. The rapidity with which a modern metropolis may emerge, once it is established as a commercial and financial center, is one of the marvels of our modern life. I feel safe in saying that if Babylon should not become the focus of money and trade, it would never rise from the dust again. No one will choose it as the political capital of the world. But its commercial possibilities are unlimited, for it is at the crossroads of continental commerce.

In many ways the city named for Our Lady the Queen of the Angels (now shortened to Los Angeles)

may serve as an example of what Babylon will be. Just as the Jews will go there with immense wealth, and use it to pander to their souls, so many come here to spend what they have gained elsewhere. This leads to an immense traffic in many of the things listed as purchased by luxurious Babylon. "Gold and silver and precious stones and pearls" (Un. 18:12) are bought in abundance. Indeed, they are not confined to the wealthy. "Purple and silk and scarlet" are well represented by the marvelous and costly clothing worn by multitudes who can well afford it. Fine woods are everywhere, though, of course, citron wood and ivory are more suited to an oriental city. Copper and iron are used in large quantities, especially in fine buildings and their trim. Marble is imported for the most magnificent interiors.

The spices used in Babylon are not common in the west, but most of the time, even during the period of prohibition, wine has flowed freely. Olive oil is still a staple. The means of sustenance, flour and grain and beasts are, of course, imported in immense quantities.

The last two items, bodies and souls (18:13), are significant. Each wealthy family calls for a retinue of servants. They are wanted for their bodies and their souls. Their spirits are not paid for or desired. Their labor and weariness are purchased for the pleasure of their opulent masters. This list seems to include almost everything which men may desire or money can obtain. It represents a city swollen with wealth and able to provide all the soulish delights which it craves.

The forerunner of Babylon is the moving picture capital of the world. This business is largely in the hands of the Jews. Much of the world's wealth flows to Los Angeles by this means. It is a typical example, and shows clearly how Babylon will get and spend her enormous income. Moving pictures are, in themselves, quite neutral. They need not be any worse than printed illustrations. But I am told that their average moral

tone is very low. They are an influence for evil. The sole criterion of their worth is the box office receipts. The Jewish magnates will descend to any depth for money. Thus the gentile is paying the Jew to degrade him. The money is partly spent in extravagant luxury, such as will characterize Babylon, the commercial capital of the future.

The account of Babylon's importations occurs in the midst of a description of its destruction. The merchants who supplied these things are graphically represented as standing at a distance, mourning the loss of their best customer, for Babylon will wallow in such wealth that she will enrich all with whom she trades. They are principally concerned with her luxuries. All her apparel will be imported. It is described in terms which connote the utmost magnificence to the oriental mind. Purple and scarlet are not merely colors, but cloth confined to kings' courts and those who can afford the costliest clothing. Gold and precious stones and pearls are only for those whose excessive wealth leads them to indulge in extravagant display. None of this is produced in Babylon. She becomes the world's largest importer and best purchaser of the precious produce of the earth.

In the midst of the description of her sudden destruction, we get a glimpse of the social delights of Babylon. It will be filled with music. Lyre singers and entertainers, and flutists and trumpeters will fill the air with the concord of sweet sounds. So, today, there are few hours of the day or night when I cannot turn on the radio and listen to some entrancing tune, some deep-voiced organ or merry lilt. Not only the ears, but the eyes are satiated with brilliant and beautiful lights. The nights are bright with electric bulbs. The streets are gorgeous with colored signs which shine and disappear and shine again. Some seem to fall in cascades of fire. The steady glow of the new neon tubes in artistic designs indicates some of the marvels possible to such a city as Babylon. It will banish

the night with its brilliance. It will satiate the ear with its symphonies (18:22, 23).

It is evident that Babylon will not be satisfied with the sumptuous splendor and power she attains. We read that the fruition for which her soul yearned passed away from her (18:14). She will never reach the heights to which she aspires. There can be little doubt that Babylon aims at nothing less than the complete domination of the earth, politically as well as economically and financially. The strangle hold which they obtain is only a means to put the nations completely under their yoke. They may not be good students of prophecy, but Israel's ideal, of being the head, of subduing all the other nations, is the instinctive heritage of the apostate Jew as well as the devout follower of Moses. What God has promised them in their holy writings, earth's suzerainty, is the fruition for which they wait.

In the original the thought of fruition is expressed in a term of much significance. Literally it is *opōra*, JUICE-HOUR. The kingdom of Israel is often represented under the figure of a fig tree. Indeed, the only miracle of doom wrought by our Lord was the cursing of the fig tree, to indicate the effect of Israel's apostasy. His word was, "No longer, by any means, may fruit come of you for the eon" (Mat. 21:19). *The kingdom cannot come in this eon*. The "church" may call itself "the kingdom", and thus prove its own apostasy, apostate Jewry may seek to set up the kingdom by their own endeavors, but no one can inaugurate the kingdom except the King. All other efforts are futile failures, as well as an affront to His Word.

Figs are peculiar in this, that, when fully ripe, they are filled with a syrup, sweet as honey, yet if plucked before the hour of ripeness, they exude a milk-white poisonous juice, unfit for food. The time of Israel's rule is very near when Babylon seeks to pluck the fruit, but they are too early. The juice is still bitter. They are

before God's time. The fruition they yearn for cannot come in this eon. It cannot come without the coming of the Christ Whom they spurn, Who is the true King of Israel. It cannot come through the curse they have put upon the nations. It is insipid and bitter and poisonous, for the fruit is not quite ripe.

THE SIGN OF THE MILLSTONE

Seldom do we see a large city suddenly plunged into utter destruction. The nearest approach in my experience was the San Francisco earthquake, when, without a moment's warning, a large part of the Pacific metropolis was shaken and set on fire, and reduced to a pile of smoking ruins. Some such disaster will overtake Babylon. In the midst of high living and joy and revelry, within the compass of a single day, her life will be visited with death, her joy will be turned to mourning, her plenty will be displaced by famine, and fire will devour the debris that has not been previously destroyed (18:8).

The Jews of our Lord's generation were held guilty of crimes committed from the beginning up to their day (Mat. 23:35). From the blood of Abel down to the latest victim of religious hatred—all were held against the generation that crucified our Lord. To some, the justice of this is not apparent at first glance. Why should they be charged with acts they did not commit? They do not see the depths of God's righteous judgment. Why did the Jews fail to do these unrighteous deeds? Simply because they lacked the opportunity. They would have done so had they lived at the time. While they built ornamental tombs for the prophets whom their progenitors had persecuted and killed, they followed their fathers in their treatment of God's messengers.

Of Babylon we read: "in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth" (18:24). It is not necessary to prove

that Babylon literally murdered all of these, for Jerusalem, in the passage we have just been considering, was also charged with the same. Babylon was not in existence when Abel was slain. But Babylon is guilty of all, just as the crucifiers of our Lord were charged with all. Babylon completes the sum of Jewish apostasy. It will have a heart to murder all who are true to Jehovah. All the prophets and saints would be killed had she the opportunity. Hence it is most just to find their blood in her and judge her accordingly.

Such, indeed, is the opinion of the vast throng in heaven. They are fully satisfied with His indictment against her and the justice of His visitation upon her. Therefore, they cry, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power is of our God, for true and just are His judgments, for He judges the great prostitute who corrupts the earth with her prostitution, and avenges the blood of His slaves at her hand. . . . Hallelujah!" (19:1-3). This is the end of apostate Israel. It is the consummation of this evil con. It is the crisis of all the cons. Henceforth Israel will fulfill her God-given functions, and be a blessing to all the nations. Her iniquity culminates and closes with the destruction of Babylon. Hence the twenty-four elders and the animals echo the throng, saying, "Amen! Hallelujah!"

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 19:6-21

⁶And I hear as it were the voice of a vast throng, and as it were the sound of many waters, and as it were the sound of strong thunders, saying, *"Hallelujah! for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns! ⁷We may be rejoicing and exulting and will be giving glory to Him, seeing that the wedding of the Lambkin came, and Its bride makes herself ready."* ⁸And to her it was granted that she should be clothed in clean, resplendent cambric, for the cambric is the just awards of the saints.

⁹And he is saying to me, "Write, 'Happy are they who have been invited to the wedding dinner of the Lambkin.'" And he is saying to me, "These are the true sayings of God." ¹⁰And I fall in front of his feet to worship him. And he is saying to me, "See! No! I am a fellow-slave of yours and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

¹¹And I perceived heaven opened, and, *lo!* a white horse. And He Who is sitting on it is called "Faithful and True," and in righteousness is He judging and battling. ¹²Now His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems, having names written of which no one except Himself is aware, ¹³and He is clothed in a cloak dipped in blood, and His name is called "The Word of God". ¹⁴And the armies in heaven followed Him on white horses, being dressed in cambric, white and clean. ¹⁵And out of His mouth a sharp saber is issuing, in order that with it He should be smiting the nations. And *He* will be shepherding them with an iron club. And *He* is treading the wine trough of the furious indignation of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶And on His cloak and on His thigh He has a name written: "King of kings and Lord of lords."

¹⁷And I perceived another messenger standing in the sun. And he cries with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which are flying in mid-heaven, *"Hither! Be gathered for God's great dinner, ¹⁸that you may be eating the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of the strong, and the flesh of horses and of those who are sitting on them, and the flesh of all freemen as well as slaves, and of small and great."*

¹⁹And I perceived the wild beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered to do battle with Him Who is sitting on the horse and with His army. ²⁰And the wild beast is arrested, and with it the false prophet, who does signs before it, by which he deceives those getting the emblem of the wild beast, and those worshiping its image. Living, the two were cast into the lake of fire burning with sulphur. ²¹And the rest were killed by the saber which is coming out of the mouth of Him Who is sitting on the horse. And all the birds are satiated with their flesh.

GOD'S GREAT DINNER

EACH of the two divisions of the Temple Section of the Unveiling closes with a double description of its effects. There is blessing for believers and its opposite for apostates. When the ark of the covenant is displayed (11:19), Jehovah is faithful to His promises, and there is a Harvest (14:4), in which He gathers the grain into His garner. Yet there is also a Vintage (14:17) for those who come into conflict with His covenant. They are trodden in His indignation. So also, when the law is exposed in the tabernacle of the testimony, it issues in the Marriage of the Lambkin, for the faithful. Yet there is also God's Great Dinner to describe the ruin of the religious rebels who seek to set aside His testimony in the earth.

How skillfully does the divine Author group His pictures! How striking is the contrast between these two presentations! And yet there is a likeness, quite as close as that between the Harvest and the Vintage (14). There is feasting in both. There is a dinner at the wedding (19:9) as well as on the battlefield (19:17). The nations who will be invited to Israel's marriage festival will be satisfied with food. The carnivorous creatures of the air will be satiated with the flesh of those who resist God's mandates. In both pictures the nations have a place. Israel, of course, is not invited to the wedding. It is not necessary to invite the bride! The nations will rejoice with her during the thousand years, after their rebellious cohorts have been fed to the fowls of heaven.

Except to enforce this contrast, we will not deal with the marriage of the Lambkin at this time. We will remind ourselves of it again when we gaze upon the new Jerusalem of the succeeding eon. Our present purpose is to concentrate on that final effort of religious humanity which seeks to wipe out the knowledge of God from the earth, and the miraculous intervention of Jehovah in the final struggle for religious supremacy at the conclusion of this eon (19:11-21). There is little doubt but that this scene is the sequel to the mobilization at Harmageddon, under the sixth bowl. It also seems to coincide with the Vintage in the vale of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:1, 2, Un. 14:17-20) at the close of the preceding division of the Unveiling. It also corresponds to a brief hint in the seventh trumpet of the Throne Section: "the nations are angered, and Thy indignation came" (11:18).

We must not overlook the significance attached to the places where this mis-called "battle of Armageddon" is mentioned. It is barely adverted to under the Throne judgments. It is repeatedly recalled in the Temple portion. It is not so much a political as a religious struggle. It is not a question of government or territory, but of worship. By this time the whole world will be under a single head, who demands more than fealty, and claims to be deity. Because there are those in Israel who are still faithful to the true God, this imposing military armament is brought together, so as to fully and finally crush the last vestige of Jehovah worship in the earth.

This is in fullest accord with the prophet Joel, who calls for a *jehad*, or holy war (Joel 3:9), on the part of the nations. And heaven's response is to the same effect, for the White Horse Rider is called by names more current in the court of God than the courts of kings. He is called "Faithful and True" because they are faithless and false. He acts in righteousness, for they are exponents of iniquity. He is called "the Word of God" be-

cause they have followed the commands of demons. His cloak is dipped in blood because the religion of that day will repudiate the sufferings of Christ. Even today our evangel is called the religion of the shambles. Then they will find that theirs is the real religion of the shambles. They would not have the blood of Christ, yet they contribute their own to the bloodiest slaughter in all the annals of humanity. It is only after all of these religious references that we read that He is "King of kings and Lord of lords".

HEAVEN OPENED

At the beginning of the Throne section, when judgment was about to be set in motion, a door was opened in heaven (Un. 4:1). Near the close of the era of His indignation, heaven itself is opened, and the White Horse Rider sallies forth. Nothing is more apparent in this evil eon than the fact that all communication between heaven and a rebellious world is completely cut off. Nothing will be more characteristic of the coming eon than the constant communication between the two spheres. Here we have the process by which this is brought about. Through the opened door emerge the lightnings of the Throne. This, the final Temple judgment, removes the wall between earth and heaven by crushing the followers of all false faiths.

THE WHITE HORSE

The symbolism of the White Horse is not as obvious to us as it is to eastern eyes. There it was the token of exalted rank. All common folk rode on camels or asses if they rode at all. Horses were almost exclusively for use in war. Paul was convoyed by a company of cavalry (Acts 23:23). The opening calamity of the Throne section is revealed by the figure of a white horse whose rider was armed with a bow and went forth a conqueror. Hence a white horse is the scriptural sign of high military command. So it is here.

The fact that the first rider under the first seal was mounted on a white horse does not identify him with this One. He had a bow, this One is armed with a sharp saber, which issues out of His mouth. His course of conquests will breed further war and famine and pestilence, this One will wage one battle which will end war and all its train of terrors. He was the false, this is the true Messiah. Alas, the likeness will probably deceive many in that day, for it is the aim of antichrists to ape Him rather than to oppose, to deceive rather than defy.

To get the full effect of this martial scene, we should recall Christ's entry into Jerusalem, in the days of His humiliation, when He first presented Himself to His people as their King. Then He was the lowly One. He bore no sword. He rode no horse. He had no army behind Him. Yet He was every inch a King! He exercised His royal prerogative by commandeering a mount owned by one of His subjects, without explanation or recompense. "The Lord has need of them" is no excuse for a peasant of Palestine who takes and uses beasts that belong to another. No one but the King dared to draft and impress these animals into His service. He proves His regal claims by conducting Himself with regal dignity, yet in full accord with the predictions concerning His humble station.

No doubt the lowly beasts that supported Him in His "triumphal" entry were chosen to accord with His humble state. Yet they also suggest the fact that He was upheld by the redeemed alone in this, the first time He comes to claim the crown. The firstling of an ass had to be ransomed with a lamb (Ex. 13:13). Only the ransomed crowd around Him and spread their garments in the road. Only they cried "Hosanna to the Son of David!" True, the whole of Jerusalem is aquake, but they do not acclaim Him king. It was not a "triumphal" entry by any means. It was a tragic entry, for they reject and crucify their lowly Sovereign.

In vain had the prophet declared (Zech. 9:9),

Say to the daughter of Zion,
Lo! Your King is coming to you,
Meek, and mounted on an ass,
And on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

They will not have the lowly One. Instead of searching the Scriptures which foretold His coming, they ask, in blinded ignorance, "Who is this?" And all they see is a Nazarean prophet. He acts accordingly. He does not seek the scepter, or sit upon a throne. He turns aside to the sanctuary and gives us a glimpse of His regal rights as He overturns the tables of the brokers and casts out the devotees of commerce. The cleansing of the sanctuary is the first concern of the true Messiah.

Who can discover a single sign to identify the White Horse Rider with the meek Messiah on His lowly mounts? The Lamb has been transformed into the Lion. He no longer needs to borrow a beast from one of His subjects. He provides a whole army of white steeds to horse His heavenly hosts. He rides no slow-paced donkey now, but a swift thundering charger to chase and pursue His enemies. His gracious glance and uncrowned head give place to eyes of flashing flame and many diadems. Weaponless He was, but now His mouth sends forth a saber and His hands hold fast the shepherd's iron club.

THE MANY DIADEMS

A diadem is usually a fillet or circlet about the head rather than an elaborate metal crown, so there is no great incongruity in the picture presented by many diadems. Though usually taken to be the insignia of royalty exclusively, it seems to be used in a special sense in the Scriptures. It does not occur in the Throne section. Diadems first appear on the seven heads of the wild beast (12:3). Again we see them on the ten horns (13:1). If our exegesis is correct, these signify sacerdotal sovereignties, for they represent religious

divisions. Whatever the interpretation may be, there is little doubt that the many diadems on His brow correspond to those already mentioned, on the heads and horns of the wild beast. All the sovereignty, religious as well as secular, wielded by the wild beast is in reality vested in the White Horse Rider and becomes His in fact when the beast is arrested and cast into the fiery lake. Force, unstinted force, will be used, not only in establishing the rule of Messiah, but in maintaining the worship of the true God.

If this is suggested by His many diadems, then the succeeding features are most apt. The displaced religions may all be characterized by the lack of two essentials—the blood and the book. Not so this White Horse Rider. He is clothed in a cloak dipped in blood and His name is called “The Word of God”. He is the living counterpart of the written word. God expresses His thoughts through Him, yet not through His life alone, but also through His sufferings and His death. The Word of God must wear a robe dyed with blood, even as the Scriptures are saturated with the sufferings of the great Sacrifice. What name could be more apt, what symbol more satisfactory, for Him Who comes to crush the false faiths of mankind, than the crimson cloaked Logos, the Word of God, not only living, but vivified from His sacrificial death?

HIS HEAVENLY ARMIES

Let us not miss the features which distinguish the heavenly hosts from the human army it opposes and from its great Leader. There is no infantry. There really is no cavalry, for all of the horses are white, and every one who follows Him is of exalted rank. It is an army of princes, a host of mighty dignitaries. Moreover, they have no weapons, they take no active part in the battle. That is not necessary, for their mighty Captain is in the van and He alone is able to destroy the enemy. The

saber that proceeds out of His mouth is His word. He has raised the dead to life: how much easier to drag the living down to death! They are dressed in white, for they are righteous, cleansed by the crimson tide in which His cloak was dipped.

That Israel is not alone in these unfoldings is clear in both of the pictures presented. The millennial marriage feast must have guests, and Israel is the bride. Those who attend are the nations, for they will be blessed with faithful Israel. Here, however, they come before us as the subjects of death and discipline. The sword that proceeds out of His mouth will smite the nations before the millennium and the iron club will chastise them during its course.

THE WINE TROUGH

All of these presentations are figurative. Our Lord will not literally wield an iron club. No actual saber will issue from His mouth. The bloody cloak, the many diadems, and even the white horses are magnificent and expressive symbols. Only thus can we understand the sudden change of scene from a mighty military figure to a treader of the grapes (19:15). This change of figures is the best and most suggestive way of identifying this military movement with the Vintage of the previous section. Both are combined in the dramatic dialogue presented by the prophet Isaiah:

ISAIAH 63:1-6

1¹ "Who is this, coming from Edom [red],
Fermenting in garments from Bozrah [vintage]?
This One, honored, by His clothing,
Marching in the vastness of His vigor?"
"I, speaking in righteousness,
A multitude to save!"

This translation is tentative. There are a number of difficult problems in it which can be better solved later. The following notes mention some of the interesting features.

¹ The fact that "Edom" is also the word for "red", and Bozrah means "vintage", should be noted by the English reader. Perhaps we should render Bozrah "the vintage". The word translated "dyed" in the Authorized Version they usually render "leaven"

- ²“For what reason is there red on Thy clothing,
And Thy garments as a treader in the wine trough?”
- ³ “The winepress I tread alone,
And of the peoples there is no man with Me,
And I am treading them in My anger,
And I am tramping them in My fury,
And spattering is their gore on My garments,
And all My clothing I sully.
- ⁴ For the day of vengeance is in My heart,
And the year of My redeemed is come,
- ⁵ And I am looking, and there is no helper,
And I am desolated, and there is no supporter,
And saving for Me is My arm,
And My fury, *it* supports Me!
- ⁶ And I am trampling peoples in My anger,
And I am breaking them in My fury,
And I am bringing down to the earth their gore!

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

This majestic ascription is another clue given us in order that we may associate this battle with the seventh

(Ex. 12:19, 20, 34, 39; Hos. 7:4), otherwise “cruel” (Psa. 71:4) and “grieved” (Psa. 73:21). It means FERMENT. The juice of the grapes ferments on the garments of the treader. In the East each class was dressed to indicate the wearer's rank in society. “Clothes of honor” indicate high dignity.

“Marching” is rendered “captive exile” (Isa. 51:14), “traveling” in this passage and “wander” in Jeremiah 2:20; 48:12, 12. As a noun it is “bed” (Isa. 28:20). An allied form is “couch” (Gen. 49:4) and “bed” (1 Chr. 5:1; Job 17:13; Psa. 63:6; 132:3). An allied verb is “make bed” (Psa. 139:8), “lay” (Esther 4:3), “spread” (Isa. 14:11; 58:5). None of this accords with the word “coming” in the first line, so it has been deemed best to take the reading of the Vulgate, which shows that the Hebrew text then read “marching”. The words “greatness” and “mighty” (in the Authorized Version) are the same in Hebrew. They are usually rendered “much”, “many,” “increase,” “multiply,” etc. There are other words for greatness and might.

² The wine trough and the wine press are two names for the same thing. The vat is not in view in this vision. We have sought to carefully distinguish “treading”, “tramping,” and “trampling”.

³ The word “gore” seems right in its two occurrences in this passage, but elsewhere the same letters have the sense of “permanence”. The LXX has it “blood” in both places, but the Authorized Version changes it to “strength” in verse six. “Blood” is another well-known Hebrew word.

⁵ The word “desolated” is thus translated so often elsewhere, that we are testing it in this usage. Perhaps we shall fall back on the usual variant of the Authorized Version, “astonished”. There is no excuse for the word “wonder” here.

⁶ The word “drunk” and “break” differ only in the matter of a small projection on the center letter. Quite a few manuscripts have the latter rendering and it corresponds far better with the parallel “trampling”. It is confusing to change the figure abruptly. The peoples are the grapes in one line. They can hardly drink the wine in the same couplet.

trumpet (11:15), when loud voices from heaven proclaimed that "The world kingdom became our Lord's and His Christ's, and He shall be reigning for the cons of the eons!" Hence, at this crisis the sovereignty of Christ as King and Priest is fully established. The seventh trumpet, which ends the Throne section, the Vintage, which closes the covenant division of the Temple section, and this great Dinner, which sums up the testimony division, all speak of the same event—the advent of Christ in power and great glory to take vengeance on His adversaries and to destroy the powers of evil.

THE GREAT DINNER

We now turn for a hasty glance at the fearful slaughter of the army of the wild beast. A single carcase, with its stench, its croaking scavengers, its circling vultures, is enough to make one shudder and hasten away. At a distance, however, it is interesting to watch the birds of prey. From all directions they gather to the feast, until it is over. It is said that a vulture not only watches the ground with telescopic eyes, but observes the actions of others of its kind, soaring at vast distances in all directions. The moment that one sees another come down upon a quarry it hastens to the scene, and is itself observed by those still further from the feast. In this way carrion is soon consumed. But so great a slaughter as that which closes man's day requires such a concourse of scavengers as never yet has been, so all the birds are invited to the feast by a supernatural call. There is no reason why this should not be a literal and actual occurrence. The details do not admit of any spiritualizing. The flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of the strong, the flesh of horses, the flesh of freemen and slaves, of small and great, will be set before the voracious scavengers whose natural instinct will need no urging, in order that the foul remains of man's mightiest array may be removed from the earth.

THE WILD BEAST AND FALSE PROPHET

Only two individuals out of the mighty army are left alive. The wild beast and the false prophet are not slain. All about them their companions furnish a feast for the feathered flyers of the air. Their judgment waits until the great white throne. These two stand alone, unprotected from the fury of the heavenly hosts. They are seized alive and cast into the sulphurous lake. Why are they not executed with the rest? Why are they the first to enter the burning flames? Why are they sent there before the judgment day?

The process of judgment varies with the character of the crime. A rebel, caught redhanded, is not brought to trial. He is shot without delay. In these two arch-criminals we have the very height of human rebellion. There is no question as to their guilt. They have been the embodiment of Satan, the Adversary incarnate, for he gives them all their power and their authority. Moreover, they are superhuman. The wild beast has been dead, and was recalled to life (13:3). The false prophet could give spirit to the image (13:11-15). They, undoubtedly, possess vitality unknown to other mortals, and this was secured by lawlessly yielding to Satan. In all probability the lake of fire cannot quench this vital spark in them as it would with all other men. They seem to live in the midst of the most deadly of all elements. We know that Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Another were able to survive the fire when under the divine protection (Dan. 3:8-30). To them it was a blessing. Why should not God allow His two most malignant enemies power enough to prove that the superhuman, miraculous vitality that enabled them to command the wondering worship of mankind, is a thing of desperate dread and despair when it keeps them alive in the midst of deadly flames?

We are not told that their life is forfeited. The lake

of fire is not called the second death until after the great white throne. After the thousand years we still find them there. Then the Slanderer also is cast into the lake of sulphur, and they are tormented for the eons of the eons (20:10).

Only Satan, his two lieutenants, and the believers in Israel who apostatize and receive the mark of the beast, do not appear before the great white throne. They only are tormented for the eons of the eons. In this we see and admire the righteous character of God's dealings with His creatures. It is utterly unscriptural and unjust to treat everyone alike. It is the height of folly to suppose that God is going to visit all unbelievers with eternal torment, such as infants, the heathen, those whose lives and benefactions put to shame the saints. All will be *judged* and assigned their deserts. Only these do not appear before the great assize, and they alone are doomed to bear the severest and the longest sentence—torment for the eons of the eons.

Yet even their sufferings will, no doubt, be measured by their guilt. Satan does not enter the lake of fire until the others have endured it for a thousand years, yet all are inclined to think he is the chief offender and deserves the heaviest penalty. Let us be glad to leave them in the hands of a God in Whom we have the utmost confidence, and Who will not mistreat even these, the most malignant of His enemies.

Some, whose hearts have been softened by God's grace, will find even eonian torment hard to reconcile with a God of love. But it is far less of a problem than the prolonged agony of millions of His creatures during the past eons, concerning which we can have no doubt. We must remember the lesson of the book of Job. Suffering is not merely penal. It comes to all—even to His saints. When visited in judgment its measure must be such as to correct and restore the creature to the point where God's love in Christ will be welcomed by the heart.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 20:1-10

20 And I perceived a messenger descending out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a large chain in his hand. ²And he lays hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the Slanderer and Satan, and binds him a thousand years. ³And he casts him into the abyss and locks it, and sets a seal upon it (lest he should still be deceiving the nations) until the thousand years should be finished. After these things he must be loosed a little time.

⁴And I perceived thrones, and they are seated on them, and judgment was granted them. And the souls of those who have been executed because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who do not worship the wild beast or its image, and did not get the emblem on their forehead and on their hand—they also live and reign with Christ a thousand years. ⁵ (The rest of the dead live not until the thousand years should be finished.) This is the former resurrection.

⁶Happy and holy is he who is having a part in the former resurrection; over these the second death has no jurisdiction, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will be reigning with Him the thousand years.

⁷And whenever the thousand years should be finished, Satan will be loosed out of his jail. ⁸And he will be coming out to deceive all the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to be mobilizing them for battle, their number being as the sand of the sea. ⁹And they ascended over the breadth of the earth, and surrounded the citadel of the saints and the beloved city. And fire descended from God out of heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰And the Slanderer who is deceiving them was cast into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the wild beast and where the false prophet are also. And they will be tormented day and night for the eons of the eons.

THE TWO MILLENNIUMS

“THE MILLENNIUM” has become a much abused and overworked phrase. Many use it for all future bliss. Its definition has vanished into a nebulous mist. There are two distinct periods of time in the day of the Lord, each of which is a thousand years in duration. So there are really two millenniums, one of which begins and ends a bit before the other. Satan is bound for a thousand years seventy-five days before the saints are roused to reign, and he is loosed a like period before their rule is over. This clear-cut prediction comes from combining Daniel’s revelation with the Apocalypse. The ancient oracles knew nothing of any millennium. The thousand years are never mentioned. The prophets usually refer to Jehovah’s day, a longer period. They are especially concerned with the judgment era which precedes the thousand years.

As the thousand years’ reign of the saints is brought before us in only one short passage, there should be very little difficulty in determining what the Scriptures have to say concerning it. Only three verses (20:4, 5, 6) contain all there is. To begin with, we are informed of the first, or former, resurrection. This *precedes* the thousand years, for the saints cannot reign until after they themselves have been raised from the dead. Some time *after* the thousand years, at the great white throne, the dead, great and small, are raised and judged (20:12). Lest this should not be believed, lest some ancient Hebrew prophecy be misconstrued, we are specially and strikingly assured that the rest of the dead

do not live until the thousand years are finished (20:5).

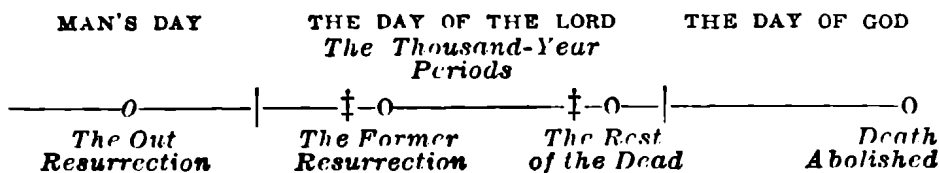
Nothing could be taught more clearly or could be more carefully guarded, than the fact that *there is no resurrection in this thousand years*. Saints are vivified before, sinners are raised thereafter, but no one is raised therein. This is the only passage which deals specifically with this period of time. It is the final word. It recognizes the possibilities of error, so puts the matter both positively and negatively. If we have been led astray by a false interpretation of previous revelation, it is the utmost folly to discredit the divine warning which seeks to set us right. The motorist who consults a road sign and finds he is traveling in the wrong direction does not destroy it and go on. He is thankful for it and turns back. God's Word will not change to accommodate us. Let us bow our hearts and heed it.

Although there is no resurrection in this thousand years, there will be death. The life span of men shall be lengthened as the trees, nevertheless, sin will not be absent, so that "a youth of a hundred years shall die" (Isa. 65:20). These go to join the dead of previous eras. "who live not until the thousand years may be finished" (20:5), and later stand before the great white throne (20:12).

A great many passages in the Hebrew Scriptures are supposed to find their fulfillment in the "millennium". Such loose language is misleading. Doubtless much prophecy does apply to this period of time. But it will never do to use every passage dealing with the future day of the Lord, or day of Jehovah, and say "this is in the millennium". The thousand years of the saints' priestly reign is only a part of the day of Jehovah. This day begins a good while before, and it ends somewhat later. We cannot say that, since the resurrection occurs in the day of the Lord, therefore it is in the millennium. The opposite is true. Both the former and the latter resurrections occur in the day of Jehovah, but neither is in

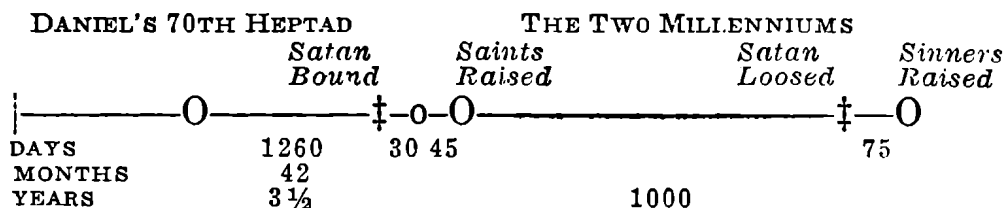
the thousand years. One occurs in the period before it, the other in the era that follows.

The following diagram may help to make this plain:



We are in man's day. Near the end of this day, perhaps very near its close, there will be an eclectic resurrection of the body of Christ. No other saints will participate in this. Hence it is designated by the special prefix, *out* (Phil. 3:11). It is not known in the Hebrew Scriptures, nor is it found in any of the later writings except Paul's epistles. After the introductory judgments of the Lord's day we have the "former" resurrection, so-called in contrast to that of the rest of the dead, which comes near its close. Between these two is the thousand years, popularly called the millennium, in which there is no resurrection. As the rest of the dead go into the second death, these must be made alive at the end of the day of God, when death is abolished.

We have tried to distinguish the two periods of a thousand years by using double daggers to indicate the first. No one knows the length of man's day, or Jehovah's day, or the day of God. But the two millenniums are each exactly a literal thousand years long. The small variant between the two millenniums is exactly and literally seventy-five days (Dan. 12:11, 12). Christ's epiphany, or appearing, for the Circumcision, will be precisely twelve hundred sixty days from the center of Daniel's seventieth heptad. From this time, when the daily offering is taken away, until it is resumed, will be twelve hundred and ninety days. Forty-five days from this event, the Circumcision saints are raised. These periods may be shown graphically thus:



Of one thing we may be sure. We cannot find definite time limits for the day of Jehovah, the day of God, the new creation, and particularly the millennium, in the Hebrew prophets, especially the earlier ones. The later the revelation, the clearer it is. There is much in Daniel which cannot be found in Isaiah. But there is ever so much more in Peter's epistles and John's Unveiling than in any previous unfolding. There is progress in disclosing God's prophetic program. In the final unfolding the earlier ones are separated and segregated. No *inferences* from the Hebrew prophets have any weight when not in harmony with later revelations. A careful study of the original usually reveals that the inference is based on a misconception, or a loose translation.

The intelligent student of prophecy will note the gradual development of prophetic detail. The earlier predictions group together much which later unfoldings distinguish. Both are true, but both are not equally discriminating. Many a one who has seen a mountain range at a distance has imagined that it is one unbroken ridge. On closer approach it develops into a series of ridges divided by wide canyons. So with the Hebrew prophets. The earlier give us a broad, sweeping view of the future, while the later ones develop the detail. Yet it is to the pre-exile prophets that we are usually referred for the finer distinctions. Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and especially Isaiah are early prophets and *do not distinguish the times after the first advent of Messiah*.

One of the chief hindrances to clearness in acquiring prophetic truth is an unbalanced consideration of the

Hebrew prophecies. They are appealed to indiscriminately, as though they all were equally definite in their outlook on the future. Few have the acumen of our Lord, Who, when He read Isaiah 61:1, 2, stopped in the middle of the verse, though, in the Hebrew, there was not even the comma of our English version to keep Him from proceeding (Luke 4:18, 19). He knew that the acceptable year of the Lord had come, but the day of vengeance had not. We can easily imagine a modern expositor insisting that, being all one proclamation, they must be in the same period. This is the method often employed in dealing with other of Isaiah's prophecies.

As we have not the spiritual insight of our Lord, we cannot sort Isaiah's predictions into their proper time periods apart from the light of later revelations. The only wise course is to seek satisfaction on such subjects in the final unfoldings, especially in the Unveiling, and use this in interpreting the earlier predictions. In the future Isaiah sees an acceptable year, a day of vengeance, a time of joy and comfort, and a new creation. But he does not segregate these into distinct periods. He never mentions a "millennium". He does not even distinguish between the two advents of our Lord. The day of Jehovah and the succeeding day of God are all one to him. This matter is more fully explained in the chapter on the "Five Great Prophetic Periods".

It has been inferred from Isaiah 65:17-25 that the new creation is a millennial event. Isaiah does not say this. In reality he does not even imply it. He speaks of two creations, one, a new heavens and earth, the other, an exulting and elated Jerusalem. The latter is closely connected with the so-called "millennial" conditions which follow. The new creation is to be the subject of exultation and elation before it comes to pass. This is not clear in our versions, for the relation between the two is lost by translating a very uncommon combination of words by the make-shift "forever". Verse eighteen

is not an exhortation to be glad and rejoice *forever*, that is, *after* the new creation comes, but “you should be elated and exulting *until the future (odi od)* which I am creating” (Isa. 65:18, C.V.).

The same attitude toward the new creation is presented by Peter, in his second epistle (3:12). He bases his exhortation, which is especially in point during the day of Jehovah, in which the millennium is found, on the future day of God, which commences with the new creation. In the millennium they will be hoping for and hurrying the presence of the day of God. They will exult, not merely in present bliss, but in that which will then be future. They will live, as we do, in the power of their expectations.

TWO DISTINCT PERIODS

It is not generally perceived that there are two distinct though overlapping periods in the day of the Lord each of which lasts a thousand years. Satan is bound for that era (20:2) and the saints live and reign as priests for the same length of time (20:4). These two periods coincide for the most of their duration, but it is most improbable that they commence and end on exactly the same date. First Satan is bound, probably at or near the advent of Christ. The former or “first” resurrection, however, from which the second millennium dates, does not commence at that time, but seventy-five days later.

From the time when the abomination of desolation is set up in the middle of Daniel’s seventieth heptad, until the epiphany or advent of Messiah will be three and a half years, or forty-two months, or twelve hundred sixty days. The continual daily offering will not be resumed immediately, but a thousand two hundred and ninety days from its discontinuance, that is, thirty days after His advent (Dan. 12:11-13). But Daniel’s entrance into bliss is to occur one thousand three hundred thirty-five

days after the middle of the week, so that the former resurrection does not take place until forty-five days later. This gives us a period of seventy-five days, at the commencement of which Satan is bound, and at the end of which the saints are raised. Therefore, we have two millenniums, overlapping one another, but one lagging more than two months behind the other.

The same difference is observable at the end. There is a "little time" after Satan is loosed during which the saints still reign. We are not told how long it lasts, but we are assured that it is very short. During that time Satan must deceive the nations, mobilize them, and bring them up against Jerusalem. This could hardly be done in two months and a half today but, after a thousand years of peaceful progress, methods of propaganda and transportation will be far in advance of present conditions. It is remarkable how far we have gone. It is said that there are more than enough motor vehicles in California to transport the whole population at one time. In two weeks they could move all of the people in the state clear across the continent. By means of the radio, all of them could be reached in a few hours, by a single voice anywhere on earth.

These two millenniums should be kept distinct, for one gives us the negative, the other the positive side of the blessings of that day. The former millennium begins with the binding of Satan and ends with his loosing. The latter millennium commences with the former resurrection and is followed by the resurrection of judgment. All the saints of the Circumcision are raised to enjoy it. All the rest of the dead forfeit it and are not raised until it is finished. The ecclesia which is Christ's body will have been vivified long before, so that it is not in view in these unfoldings.

THE BINDING OF SATAN

It is Satan's business to deceive. Not content with

deceiving our mother Eve, and thus providing us all with deceitful hearts, he has been actively engaged ever since in inculcating error, and thus alienating humanity from God. One of the greatest problems of the eons is the manifestation of humanity to itself and to all creation. Up to the time of this millennium, mankind might claim that it had not been given a fair opportunity, because it has always been the slave of spirit powers. What would Eve have done if she had not been tempted? What would mankind have accomplished if Satan had not at all times led them astray? What will humanity do when left to itself, without the influence of sinister spirit enemies?

A great many, even today, seem to think that all that is necessary is to give everyone a "chance". Given an opportunity, they will manage very well without the power and grace of God. Such an idea is utterly antagonistic to God's great purpose to become All in all, and its falsity must be demonstrated on a scale sufficiently vast to be conclusive. It is for this reason that Satan's influence is withdrawn for a thousand years. It is not, as commonly supposed, the final earthly paradise, but a probational period in which the environment of mankind is most favorable to its moral development and calculated to awaken its appreciation of the goodness of God.

The greater part of so-called "Christian" work is influenced by this false idea today. Environment, physical, moral, and spiritual, is expected to aid, if not displace, the grace of God. The fact that most of the real work is done under unfavorable circumstances, thus magnifying God's grace, does not seem to destroy confidence in human substitutes for God's evangel. Indeed, one of the greatest deceptions of Satan today is the use of religion and ritual, of sanitation and philosophy to displace the blood and cross of Christ.

In the first thousand years the greatest hindrance to

the knowledge of God will be removed by the binding of Satan. The evangel of that day will not be false, the theology will not be fiction. The fearful confusion of conflicting creeds will not erect a barrier between mankind and God. False doctrine of all kinds will be absent. Truth will be apparent. There will be every "chance", so far as external environment is concerned, for everyone to accept the salvation of God and enter into vital union with His Christ. This is the negative side of the millennial era, and it is brought about by the removal of Satan from the scene.

THE REIGN OF THE SAINTS

Two different time periods are given in connection with the reign of the Circumcision saints over the earth. We read that they will be priests of God and of Christ and they will be reigning with Him for the thousand years (20:6). We also read, later on, that they will be reigning for the eons of the eons (22:5). As *priests*, they reign during the thousand years. When priesthood is past, then they reign as kings until the close of the eons. This, we believe, throws a light on the millennial era which has been unknown or neglected. The primary aim of the millennial reign is not political but religious. God's priests will minister to all nations and mediate between them and Jehovah. It is a sacerdotal sovereignty.

This is the positive side of the millennial experiment. Mankind has not only been the sport of spirit powers, not only has it lacked the restraint of good government, but it has never had proper priests to teach it and mediate between it and God. The ideal "opportunity" demands not only the removal of every evil influence, but that it be replaced by good. The nations will be taught the works and ways of God by a perfect priesthood. There will be visible manifestations of God's power and glory in all the earth, especially in Jerusalem.

After the thousand years, in the new earth, there will be no priests, nor even a temple (21:22), for God Himself will tabernacle with mankind and no mediator is needed between Him and humanity. This is the great distinguishing feature of the two eras. In the thousand years mankind is still estranged from Him, and priests are necessary as go-betweens. This is the characteristic feature of the millennial reign. Man is given a perfect environment in order to discover whether his lack lies there or in himself. The sequel shows that his heart is wrong, even in ideal conditions.

If the human heart could be healed by external applications, a thousand years' treatment should be sufficient to effect a cure. After freedom from deception for so long a time he should no longer be susceptible to deceit. After a righteous reign he should not rebel. After a pure worship he should not apostatize. Yet this is precisely what he does as soon as Satan is loosed. The Slanderer is just as successful in dealing with the nations who have enjoyed the blessing of the millennium as he ever was with those who were immersed in ignorance and surrounded by sin and sorrow and deceit.

Do we realize what this great defection at the end of the millennium means? We talk of that day in raptures, and so we should, but let us remember that, so far as eonian salvation is concerned, a large proportion of those who are in it are lost. An innumerable host, countless as the seaside sands, instead of being reconciled to God by its marvelous environments, are so alienated and estranged in heart, that they seize the first opportunity that comes to show their utter hostility to God and His saints. The end of their seemingly happy existence will be cremation in the fire of God's wrath (20:7-9).

It has been suggested that the millennial era is a season of second probation for those who had inadequate opportunities before. The only passage which seems to allow such a thought is Daniel's prediction of the resur-

rection: "And many sleeping in the soil of the ground shall awake, these to conian life, and these to eonian reproach and repulsion" (Dan. 12:2). Daniel, a prophet of the exile, distinguishes nothing beyond the second advent, consequently groups the former with the latter resurrection. It is on this account that John, in the Unveiling, to prevent any misunderstanding, interjects the parenthetical statement: "the rest of the dead live not until the thousand years may be finished" (20:5). We must not make an unfounded inference from an early prophet set aside the special statement which gives its proper interpretation in a latter one. Daniel and John agree perfectly, only John expands and amplifies Daniel's prediction.

But other considerations are just as convincing. The test of humanity under ideal conditions will end disastrously. If it is a second probation it is only so much greater in its failure. *The millennial era is not a successful second probation for those who have had no chance, but a failure as a first probation for those who have every opportunity.* It is not intended to save mankind but to demonstrate that God Himself is the only Saviour, and not man, no matter how ideal his environment may be. He may be happy and religious, yet have a heart ready to renounce God as soon as Satan has an opportunity to influence him. The great apostasy at the end of the thousand years is proof positive that God's goodness is not sufficient to gain the hearts of His creatures. They can be captured only by His grace.

The great white throne is not set up until after the millennium. The rest of the dead will be raised to stand before it and to be judged during the period in which it operates. They will not merely be sentenced, but will undergo the pains and penalties which are their due. All the inequities of their earthly existence will be ironed out. All wrongs will be righted. During this judgment period all unbelievers will come into contact with Christ

as the Judge. This, and the experience of His judging, will prepare them for salvation at the consummation. They have no eonian life, hence can have no part in the millennium or the con following it.

All the eons, except the final one, end in failure and disaster, and this in increasing measure. The first brought on the disruption, the second the deluge. The present ends in the awful judgments of the Apocalypse. But the worst failure of all is the millennial fiasco. It has the best "chance" (may God forgive the word!) of success. *But God does not want it to succeed!* He wants all His creatures to know that the most ideal conditions, the most perfect environment—everything suggested by such words as *chance*, *opportunity*, etc.—cannot be substituted for the sovereign and imperious compulsion of His grace.

If environment could save, each creature would eventually become all in itself. If opportunity could deliver, God's grace would be unneeded and unheeded. The mistaken idea that all that mankind needs is an adequate "chance" is so insidious, so ingrained in the human heart, that God is forced to stage a grand refutation. He binds Satan, He saves His people Israel and sends them to serve the nations. Every possible advantage is given to mankind that they may know and believe God. But the sequel shows that the most perfect and prolonged "chance" does not reach their hearts. In a few days they are alienated and arise in active rebellion against their benefactors.

The revolt at the end of the thousand years is one of the most illuminating flashes of light in the whole course of human history. It sounds the depths of human depravity. It reveals the great truth that the best "chance" for salvation lies in the lack of every proper influence. Sinners are saved today not only in spite of their surroundings, but because of the evil and sin which besets them. The binding of Satan does not lose him a

single soul. It is more than likely that his present activities, the machinations which accompany his work among mankind, actually provide the best "chance" for God's salvation to operate. The empty stomach, the lean purse, the sense of shame and remorse are more potent influences in leading men to God than honor and prosperity and well-being. The best "chance" is *no chance*.

God will get no trophies of His grace in the millennium. Most of these will come out of the preceding judgment era, or in the present secret administration. All His blessings for the thousand years will not buy the heart's allegiance of one unbeliever, even though he outwardly conforms to all the holy ritual. The only "chance" to be saved, at any time, in any environment, depends on the sovereign counsel of God's will and the operation of His holy spirit. No circumstances, no environment can hinder His work. These are chosen, not to supplement His omnipotence, but to display it, and the grace and love which underlie it. God *Himself* will be our Saviour, and He is jealous of all help. He does not need our assistance, nor that of time and place, even though these are of His own creation.

This, then, is the lesson of the millennium. It is quite the opposite of that which is usually deduced. Its close is God's concluding word to all creation, warning them to beware of confidence in dead things and inviting them to trust in the living God. Once more He locks up His creatures in stubbornness in order that He may be merciful to them. The effect is most gratifying. Henceforth, in the new earth, He is on intimate terms with mankind. All need for priesthood vanishes. He has proved that environment is not salvation, so now He can combine them without danger of misleading His creatures. He will allow no such saviour to take His place. Every creature, in the consummation, will hail Him as the only Saviour from sin, the only Reconciler from estrangement.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 20:11-13

¹¹And I perceived a great white throne, and Him Who is sitting upon it, from Whose face earth and heaven fled, and no place was found for them.

¹²And I perceived the dead, great and small, standing before the throne. And scrolls were opened, and another scroll was opened, which relates to life. And the dead were judged by that which is written in the scrolls, in accord with their acts.

¹³And the sea gives up the dead in it, and death and the unseen give up the dead in them. And they were condemned, each in accord with their acts.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

THE concluding scene in the first Temple Section of the Unveiling is the judgment of the Great White Throne (20:11-15). In the literary framework we find that it corresponds to the judgment of the saints (20:4-6). A comparison between the two will serve to emphasize the salient points of each. As to time, the saints are judged *before* the thousand years, the sinners *after* it is past. One is on the earth, the other is elsewhere. One leads to a millennium of bliss, the other to the second death. But both are *judgments*. And we must insist that this term has no sinister signification. It applies to the vindication of the saints just as aptly as it does to the condemnation of sinners. Each is preceded by a resurrection, one by the resurrection of life, the other by the resurrection of judgment.

The former resurrection is the first of a series of two. The latter resurrection occurs at the great white throne judgment, at least a thousand years later, because the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years may be finished (20:5, 6, 12). The introduction of this explanatory statement seems a little abrupt and uncalled for until we examine previous teaching on this subject. We must see that, before this, there was little or no distinction between these two resurrections before we appreciate the special effort here made to separate the former from the latter.

Daniel was a prophet of the exile, hence had light in addition to that found in Isaiah and the pre-exile proph-

ets. Where they have only one advent, Daniel has two. But beyond the second advent he does not discriminate. It is as if we looked at two stars, one in a straight line beyond the other. They will appear as one, though they may be millions of miles apart. The final revelation to Daniel seems, to some, to support the idea of a "general" resurrection and judgment, in which all, saved and unsaved, are roused. The messenger said, "And many sleeping in the soil of the ground shall awake, these to eonian life, and these to eonian reproach and repulsion" (Dan. 12:2, C. V.).

Yet a closer glance at this very passage is enough to destroy the idea that both enter a period of blessing. Whenever the unbelievers may be raised, they cannot enter an era like the thousand years. There is judgment in it, but it is always swift and condign. Even at the end, the apostasy is tolerated only long enough to come to a head. But those in Daniel are roused to eonian reproach and repulsion. There is no hint of any probation. Indeed, it would be contrary to the plain prediction to expect them to enter life, in the same sense as the other class, during the eons. So long as the eons last, one of these classes will have life, the other eonian reproach and repulsion. So much is clear in Daniel. There are two different classes, and the duration of this distinction is clearly indicated, but the time of the resurrection of each class is not divulged.

Almost everyone imagines that, since both are mentioned in the same breath, they must occur simultaneously. The memory of Isaiah 61:2: "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God," should prevent us from any such deduction. Rather, since we know, from our Lord's example and other passages, that the day of vengeance will follow the acceptable year, we should infer that the class which is mentioned last follows the former. This, of course, is only an inference, but it has a precedent, and the other

inference has not even that. We know, from later unfoldings, that these two classes are raised in the order given, but separated by a thousand years.

This indefiniteness as to the time of the resurrections is not confined to the Hebrew prophets. Even Paul, before Felix, speaks of a "future resurrection of the just as well as the unjust" (Acts 24: 15). Our Lord separates them but slightly, saying, "the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will be hearing His voice, and those who do good things shall be going out into a resurrection of life, yet those who commit bad into a resurrection of judgment" (John 5: 28-29). Note that He, as well as the messenger in Daniel, mentions the former resurrection *first*. Both speak of the rousing of two kinds of people. The Lord mentions two manner of resurrections. It is the function of the Unveiling to amplify and clarify these earlier unfoldings. Our inferences may only lead us astray. Previous revelation was not explicit as to the time periods. This is the reason that we read of a "former" resurrection and are warned that the rest of the dead have no part in it.

The somewhat vague statement in Daniel needs elucidation. All are agreed on that. The particular point is the time when the two classes are to be roused from the dead. We might formulate it into a question: "Are the rest of the dead roused when the saints receive eonian life?" The spirit of God recognizes this difficulty. After telling us of the resurrection of Daniel's first class, the instructive parenthesis is inserted to the effect that the second class is *not* included at that time, but waits until the end of the thousand years. There is a former and a latter resurrection included in Daniel's prediction. The thousand years is no place for those who endure reproach and repulsion. The former resurrection includes only those who are blessed and holy.

Our Lord gave character to these two resurrections by calling one a resurrection of life, the other a resurrection

of judgment (John 5:29). This is further amplified by John, in the Unveiling, and by Paul, in the fifteenth of first Corinthians. All who have part in the former resurrection are blessed and holy. Everyone roused before the thousand years belongs to Christ, and receives eonian life and all the hallowed bliss to which that is the introduction. The people of the millennial era are not all saints by any means, but those resurrected are of no other class. Those doomed to reproach and eonian repulsion cannot be included in the former resurrection.

Our Lord's characterization of these two resurrections is most suggestive. Both lead to life and judgment. But the emphasis in one case is on *life*, for they are vivified, and can never die, even though they are judged. The other emphasizes *judgment*, for, though they are raised, they die again. One gives life until the eons are finished, and then endless life. The other leads to a temporary return for judgment and the second death, and they do not enter into eonian life in any real sense at all. They are not vivified until the eons are past and death is abolished.

Paul makes this most emphatic in his marvelous summary of vivification (1 Cor. 15:20-28). There are only three occasions when resurrection includes "making alive", or when the dead are recalled to immortality. Christ Himself is the first. He will never die again. The second class includes the saints. All of these will be made alive at His presence. The last class includes all the rest, for death will be abolished. In each case there is not only physical life, but superabundant vitality, immortality, deathlessness. The latter resurrection, at the great white throne, for judgment, for "reproach and eonian repulsion", is not a vivification. It leads to the second death, not to eonian life.

Some things are very plain. During the eons there is no salvation apart from faith in Christ. The most innocent babe and the most noble pagan lack the one essential

for eonian life. They are not Christ's, hence are not vivified at His presence. All who have that honor receive it by grace. It is not a question of their deserts, for no one can merit such a salvation. Some reject the evangel. Others do not believe because they have never heard. Others are too immature. Since *all* that are in the graves must be roused, either in the resurrection of the just, or of the judgment, it is evident that all who are not believers, for any reason, must be raised to stand before the great white throne.

It is here that we almost all go astray. Our idea of judgment is so distorted, so warped and exaggerated by religious misconceptions, that we usually connect it only with criminals, and with the vicious and the vile. It is not so in the Word of God. Judgment is not confined to the discovery and punishment of crime. That is only incidental. It is the great tribunal at which justice will preside. Each will receive what is his due. Wrongs will be righted. The secrets of all will be exposed. Feuds will be finished. All scores will be settled.

The tragedy of human experience is recognized by all. The wicked prosper and the poor are oppressed. Few receive their due, whether good or ill. Philosophy has tried to explain this, and religion has sought to correct it in some after life. Reincarnation is merely a scheme for leveling the inequalities of fate by repeated experiments. God's method of dealing with this great problem is simple and direct. A great assize will be held, with Christ as Judge. There all who are not sheltered by His blood will get their due, and suffer for their sins.

No one is vivified at this judgment session. It is in contrast to the resurrection of life. Vivification occurs only at the presence of Christ, before the millennium begins, and at the consummation, after the following eon ends (1 Cor. 15:22-28).

Death and the unseen are cast into the lake of fire. Here we have undoubted figures of speech. We know

that persons are cast into the lake of fire, for it comprises those who are "not found written in the scroll of life" (Un. 20:15). Immediately before this we are told that death and the unseen give up the dead in them. This cannot be literal. It must be a comprehensive figure intended to include all the bodies and souls of those who are dead. "Death" contains the bodies. "The unseen" harbors their souls. As this is not a vivification, nothing is said of their spirits. The omission is most appropriate and significant. All the dead are raised and roused. We are told this by referring them to "death" and "the unseen". Later the same "death" and "unseen", once the receptacles of everyone at death, are both cast into the fiery lake. There will be no death elsewhere in the universe. The lake of fire will be the repository of all who enter the second death.

It is one of the weaknesses of the word "judgment" that it brings to mind the picture of a human judge who merely tries and sentences those brought before him, but who has nothing to do with the infliction of the sentence. Judgment, in the Scriptures, includes the pains and penalties imposed in an adverse decision. It is not merely a trial to see who deserves the second death. That point is decided entirely by the scroll of life. The other scrolls have nothing to say as to that. The judging of the acts of the unbeliever is confined to the era of the great white throne. They do not suffer in the first death which precedes it, neither are they conscious in the second, which succeeds it. Death is not the sphere of judgment. They are raised from the dead in order to be judged. They are not returned to death until judgment has been concluded.

We must remember that, to the *consciousness* of those who stand before it, this judgment follows immediately after death, and is instantly succeeded by their vivification at the consummation. Some, before the flood, may have died nearly seven thousand years before entering

into judgment, yet, so far as they are aware, it occurs at the moment of their death. All will wait many thousands of years to the end of the eons, yet, so far as they perceive, the consummation comes the very moment their judgment ends. Each unbeliever's career consists of birth, life, dying, [death], judgment, [second death], vivification. Time ceases in death. Except for the brief judgment period, they have no knowledge of the vast spaces of eonian time which they spend in absolute oblivion.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

The spirit of God emphasizes two features of this throne—its size and its color. Its greatness doubtless consists in the vastness of its jurisdiction. There have been many thrones before it, but these were related to the living. They had no sway over the countless corpses of the tombs. Earth's cemeteries are far more populous than its cities. Innumerable multitudes lie beneath its surface, waiting for the voice of Him Who sits upon the great white throne. Surely, compared to preceding thrones, it is the greatest of them all, for, if we except the saints, it includes the subjects of every other throne within its jurisdiction.

The throne is *white*. May the One Who will be seated upon it keep us from painting it black! Almost all that has been spoken or written concerning it has not only changed it to ebony, but has darkened the character of Him Who will sit upon it in that day. Judgment does not consist in dealing out pains and penalties without due deserts. He Who occupies that throne will never be unjust or vindictive. Yet this is required of Him by almost all who seek to set forth the awfulness of His judgment throne.

The reason for this is simple. The judgment is viewed in the light of its outcome. If it leads to eternal conscious torment in the lake of fire for all who stand before it—Christ-rejecting “Christians”, the immoral, the moral,

those who never heard of Christ, children, idiots, infants—as orthodoxy demands, then the throne is black and an outrage on justice and a heartless exhibition of fiendish cruelty. The very first principle of justice demands that each case should be dealt with according to its deserts. But when the most innocent infant or unoffending and ignorant pagan is given an infinite sentence of unbearable pain no such distinctions are possible. Some, who have faced this dilemma, have repudiated the damnation of infants and those who never had an opportunity to believe, but they have no Scripture for their position.

It is only when we see that the outcome of this judgment is universal reconciliation (Col. 1:20), that we can really acknowledge that the throne is white. It is only as we limit the actual infliction of pains and penalties to the judgment era and refuse to extend them into the lake of fire, that we are able to appreciate the righteousness of God's throne. Some will suffer severely, some slightly, and all according to their deserts. On all other occasions God has done His judging swiftly. There is no reason to prolong this time to infinity. The lake of fire is death, not life, and is not the means of prolonging the torture of those who appear before this august tribunal.

The dead will be judged before the great white throne, *not in the lake of fire* (20:12). Only thus will it be possible to judge them according to their acts. Only thus can they be prepared for the final reconciliation. It is entirely unscriptural and unreasonable to insist that it will take more than a lifetime to judge, or set right, the acts of a lifetime. If God were bent on sating His wrath by hurling them all into eternal torment, this judgment would be a farce, a useless gesture, vindictive and vain. The mere fact that there is a great white throne is sufficient proof that eternal torment is not the uniform sentence. The judgment is as varied as the individuals. It is as different as their acts. It is preparatory to their reconciliation,

We unconsciously color the Scriptures by our preconceptions. If we believe the unscriptural doctrine of eternal torment, judgment becomes an enigma, it is impossible to explain how there can be justice or variety, and we are driven into a hazy hope that God will do the right thing. When we apply the doctrine to infants, we are overwhelmed by its injustice and many repudiate it. Others cannot reconcile it with those who have never heard the evangel. Yet there is not a single scripture which warrants us in excusing either infants or pagans. Surely these are not saints. If they are not among the dead before the great white throne, where do they come in? Orthodoxy drives its honest adherents to conclude that the Scriptures do not reveal the destiny of by far the greatest class of mankind!

Once we believe that the dead are to be judged according to their acts and that this judgment is to be a means to their reconciliation, all doubts and difficulties vanish. The whole complexion of this great judgment scene is altered. The One Who sits on the throne is no longer a fiend, but Christ. The throne is not black, but white. There will not be a single infliction which will not meet the hearty approval of all. There will be no illusions. Each one will acknowledge his own sin and the justice of his judgment. In order to avail ourselves of the salvation of Christ we need a sense of sin. Before we can be reconciled to God we need to realize our offenses. This is the function of this judgment. The believer, by faith, anticipates this by judging himself, and receives eonian salvation. The unbeliever is judged by Christ and forfeits salvation until after the eons have run their course.

THE SCROLLS OF ACTION

There seems little doubt that the figure of the scrolls has an actual basis in fact. We need not insist that all men's actions are literally recorded in books, for every move we make is inscribed in the imperishable photo-

graphic gallery of nature. Many of the major events of our lives mark our frames. A keen physician can diagnose much of a patient's physical past. An intelligent dentist notes his health history in his teeth. All human action leaves a permanent record of some kind in the world. Theoretically, at least, all the sounds arising from the earth are still traveling through space. Likewise, all sights are soaring into its infinitudes.

We do not hear a sound when it occurs. The steam from a locomotive's whistle is usually seen before the noise is audible. Likewise, we do not see instantly. It takes time for light to travel. We cannot see the sun. What we behold is the image it made about five hundred seconds before. Consequently, if our eyesight were sufficiently keen, and we were at the proper distance from the earth, we could still see Adam and Eve in Paradise, plucking the forbidden fruit. And, if we could fly toward the earth from that point, we would behold all of earth's history, unrolling before us as it has occurred. These somewhat fantastic fancies are founded on facts, and leave little doubt that God has the action of His creatures as easily at His command as if they were all made in front of the latest movietone camera. Nature is filled with records of His creatures' acts.

What an aid to justice it would be if our courts could open such a book instead of relying on testimony! Written records, letters, photographic evidence, fingerprints, and all the minute details so dear to the detective, are far better evidence than that elicited from human witnesses. Men do not see anything alike. They color it with themselves. Even their truest testimony is tinged with their own ego. How interminable would be the session if sinners were to be judged according to the testimony of their fellows! None of this is needed. All will be confronted with the facts. The scrolls will be opened. "And the dead were judged by that which is written in the scrolls, in accord with their acts" (20:12).

THE SCROLL OF LIFE

“Another scroll was opened, which relates to life.” Some have been stumbled by the statement, “I perceived the *dead*, great and small, standing before the throne”. As a matter of *fact* they are *alive*; yet in *truth* they are *dead*. They were not raised in the resurrection of life. They are not vivified. They do not possess deathlessness, as was the case in the former resurrection. Hence, though living, they are figuratively and vividly described as dead. This is the key to the scroll which relates to life.

No one whose name is in the scroll of life will have any part in this judgment, for these are not merely judged, but condemned (20:13). It is true that most of the manuscripts read “judged”, but Sinaiticus seems more likely to be right here, as the preceding *KAI* may easily lead to the omission of the prefix *KAT-*, which changes judge to DOWN-JUDGE, or condemn. This is not the resurrection of life. It is not a vivification. It is utterly ignored when the apostle recounts the three classes to be made alive (1 Cor. 15:23, 24).

How shall we reconcile the concluding statement with these facts? “And if anyone was not found written in the scroll of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.” Does not this seem to imply that some who appear before the great white throne escape the second death? By no means. There is another and better reason why the matter is put thus. The scroll of life seems to have reference only to God’s earthly people. Moses seems to refer to it when he pleads with God for Israel. He asks to be blotted out of His book to save the sinners (Ex. 32:32). But Jehovah said that He would blot out those who had sinned. It seems as if almost all who came out of Egypt were blotted out, and will not be found in the book of life when they stand before the great white throne. The same thing seems to occur in this judgment era. The conquer-

ors will not have their names erased from the scroll of life (3:5). But all who are not conquerors, who worship the wild beast, do so because their names are not written in the scroll of life of the Lambkin Which has been slain from the disruption of the world (13:8). It is especially the Israelites whose names are not thus written who will marvel at the wild beast (17:8). And Daniel says those written in the scroll will be delivered (Dan. 12:1). Even Paul seems to hint that it was his fellow workers of the Circumcision whose names are in the scroll of life (Phil. 4:3).

All of this points to the fact that this scroll is not a register of those who receive life, as we do today, as a gift of pure grace, but as it was in Israel, with a mixture of works. The name might be erased as a result of wrong conduct. This seems the best explanation of its presence here, and of the negative way in which it is presented. We might put it thus: The other books contain the acts of all mankind who are not in covenant relationship with God. But the scroll of life deals with those in Israel, most or many of whom had their name in this book. That is, literally, they came into vital contact with Jehovah through His dealings with the nation. But with many of them God was not well pleased and their names were erased from the scroll. As the Psalmist says (Psa. 69:28):

They shall be wiped out of the scroll of the living,
And with the righteous shall they not be written.

The parallelism of the Psalmist shows that righteous conduct is demanded of all whose names are inscribed in this scroll, and that wickedness may lead to erasure.

As only those who are written in the scroll will be entitled to millennial life, those whose names have been erased from the scroll, or those in the nation who never made a vital contact with Jehovah, must needs stand before the great white throne and be judged for their

acts like the nations. Thus we have the two classes, those without law, who are judged without law, and those under law, who, notwithstanding their nearness to Jehovah and a knowledge of His works, failed to find life, or were erased from the scroll for their evil conduct. It is especially with these in view that the negative is used. Their names were once there, but now they are not. Under these circumstances it is clear that the scroll of life must be consulted before anyone is cast into the lake of fire.

Man speaks of *responsibility* and *punishment*, God of *accountability* and *judgment*. That is why, to man, it appears an awful black, but in reality is the purest white.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 20:14-15

¹⁴And death and the unseen were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death—the lake of fire. ¹⁵And if anyone was not found written in the scroll of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

THE SECOND DEATH

PERHAPS few subjects have provoked so much speculation as the lake of fire. Is it literal? Is it only a figure? What is it? The answer of Scripture is plain and clear, and all that is necessary is a calm consideration of God's explanation, rather than some plan to mitigate its apparent awfulness. God is always more merciful than man and we may well leave this theme just as He has revealed it, with the full assurance that, in every detail, it is in accord with His gracious purpose.

The divine definition of the lake of fire is "the second death". The law of the lexicographer is this: the unknown must be put in terms of the known. No true definition should need defining. It may be necessary for us in these days of apostasy to define what death is, but this has been done long ere we reach these final scenes in human history. The earth has been corrupted with the carcases of the dead for thousands of years. All men have made its intimate acquaintance in their brief lives. The Scriptures have fully defined its nature.

Death is a return. The body returns to the soil, the spirit to God, and the soul to the unseen. Those who will be cast into it will go back into the state from which they emerged at their resurrection. The lake of fire, then, is a return. The physical elements return to the realm of insensate matter; the spirit returns to God; the soul to the imperceptible, the unseen.

The first death is accomplished in a variety of ways. Perhaps most of mankind die of disease, due to the rav-

ages of sin. Some are drowned, others are burned to death. When God chose to purify the primeval earth he used water to wash His wayward creation off the ground. The deluge was a physical cleansing. The final purification of the earth will be more searching and severe. It will be a chemical change. Unredeemed mankind will be swept away by a besom of fire.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF "SECOND"

It is usually supposed that the *second* death must differ from the first. Indeed, few believe that it is a death at all. Yet the moment that we realize that the word death is chosen here as a *definition* of the lake of fire we are compelled to admit that it imperatively must have its ordinary meaning. If we look up the word "jet" in the dictionary, and find that it denotes *black*, we are not prepared to see it applied to all the colors of the rainbow. A word used as the main factor in a definition must retain its usual and accepted significance.

A long list of seconds could be given to substantiate this, but a few must suffice. We have the second day (Gen. 1:8), the second river (Gen. 2:13), a second son (Gen. 30:7), the second month (2 Chron. 30:2), the second pillar (Jer. 52:22), etc. Indeed, it is generally translated *another* in our version. In the negative its force is clearly seen, as in Ecclesiastes 4:8: "There is one alone, and there is not a second."

In the case of our Lord, Who is the second man, we are tempted to magnify His superiority over Adam, yet we must remember that this phrase is concerned only with their points of likeness.

While we must maintain the essential similarity of the first and second deaths, they undoubtedly differ in scope and intention. With few exceptions, all men enter the first death, while only unbelievers partake of the second. The first is due to the operation of natural law and seizes saint and sinner alike. The second is due to

the judicial action of God and no saint shall ever have any part in it.

When we are tempted to view the first death of a sinner as a judicial infliction of God, let us remember that the believer, who can never come into condemnation, shares the same fate. Moreover, we are then confronted with the glaring injustice of judging the sinner before his case has been brought before the great Judge. The first death can be no more to the sinner than the prison which holds him for trial. He cannot be judged before his case has been tried.

This gives us a clue to the twofold office of the second death. Like the first, it is the means of holding over the creature until God's time arrives for his vivification. The first death envelops the sinner in oblivion, so that, so far as his consciousness is concerned, he is ushered into judgment immediately after dying. The justice of this admirable provision is worthy of note. Among men it is possible to suffer imprisonment before trial for a longer term than the ultimate sentence demands. In God's great assize all are immediately brought before the bench. They do not suffer before they are sentenced. What but death could hold the sinner without violating the recognized right of all to be judged before enduring the penalty imposed?

The second death is likewise an admirable provision. To prolong the suffering and anguish of all for the immense space of the last eon would manifestly interfere with the infliction of various degrees of judgment. No sane man would consider it just to inflict a penalty for thousands of years for a life of as many days, especially in the case of some who were never called to account before a human bar and who were reckoned philanthropists by their fellow mortals.

Eonian life is only for the believer. Others cannot be vivified during the eons. What shall be done with them until the consummation? The second death is the

answer. Just as the first death held them for judgment, so the second death will hold them for reconciliation.

The discipline which changes the unbeliever into a fit subject for reconciliation at the consummation is all included in his judgment *between* the first and second deaths. If such discipline or penalty could be endured *in* death then there would be no need for a resurrection. It is called a resurrection of judgment and is in contrast to the resurrection of life. These epithets, given by our Lord Himself, are in perfect correspondence with the teaching of Paul in the fifteenth of first Corinthians. There, in giving the three classes who are to be vivified, who are to have a resurrection of life, he entirely ignores the resurrection of judgment at the great white throne. There is no hint in Scripture that anyone will receive the gift of life except at the presence of Christ, during the day of Jehovah, and at the close of the cons.

It needs no imagination to conceive the effectiveness of God's judgment. The earth is gone. The sinner is absolutely helpless. His judgment is not merely an aimless punishment for his sins, but a carefully designed discipline which will correct his errors, and, in correcting, acquaint him not only with his true self, but with God. Judgment, in the Scriptures, always has the essential thought of *righting what is wrong*. When God "judges" the widow He does not afflict her further, but avenges her wrongs, and restores her rights. When the time comes for the judgment of the dead of the first resurrection (Un. 11:18) they are not led forth for execution, but are given the awards which are rightly theirs in the kingdom. Only sinners need fear judgment, yet even to them it brings the needed discipline that rights their relationship with God.

Unbelievers are raised and judged at the great white throne. They cannot be given eonian life, but they must be vivified when death is abolished, at the consummation. This presupposes their literal death in the lake of fire.

If the lake of fire is not actual, physical death, then the abolition of death at the consummation is impossible, for there is no death to abolish. Christ was literally made alive, the saints will be actually vivified in His presence, hence the rest must be really given life at the consummation. This can only be if the lake of fire is literal death.

To understand the lake of fire aright we must grasp the fact that the preceding era is occupied with *judging*. The great white throne session is not confined to the trial and sentence of those who appear before it. During that era the dead are dealt with according to their deserts. The pains and penalties are inflicted. All the tangled affairs of humanity are adjusted and set right. All who appear before it are sinners. During their previous lifetime sin operated in them and caused their death. Is it not perfectly just that a judicial review of their acts should lead to the same sentence? The soul that sins shall die, is not merely a natural law operating in man. It is also the judicial decree of the great Throne Sitter. After suffering for their sins, all who appear before the great white throne are doomed to die again. The means for this is the lake of fire.

Let no one shrink with horror at this fact, as though it entailed excessive suffering and agony. A death by fire is not necessarily painful. God has allowed many to die the first death by means of fire. Some are unconscious before they have time to feel the flames. Others, especially His own witnesses, have suffered agonies at the stake. The lake of fire is not presented as a place of suffering, but a place of death, in connection with the great white throne judgment. Every court has some means of inflicting the extreme penalty, such as hanging or electrocution. They use the least painful process. The lake of fire is the executioner of the great white throne. Death should be instantaneous and almost painless.

All other forms of death involve corruption and de-

filement. If all were hanged, what a mass of putrefying flesh would taint the scene! Even if they were drowned, as at the flood, the carcasses would corrupt the water and the air. But fire purifies. It accomplishes a chemical change. The disintegration produces no pestilence. It is a token that sinners shall no longer defile the universe. To make this appear as though the sinners themselves were cleansed by this fire is a most serious mistake. To suppose that it serves to purify them from sin is an enormous error. Christ alone can cope with sin. Their cleansing must come through Christ, not through the purgatorial pains of the burning lake.

There are some for whom the great white throne judgment is not sufficiently severe. There are a few outstanding cases which demand sorer punishment. These are Satan, the wild beast, the false prophet, and their apostate Israelitish worshipers. These will be tormented for the eons of the eons (14:10; 20:10). Much error and confusion have arisen from applying their penalty to all without discrimination. Eonian torment is threatened only at the height of human rebellion. Even then it is evident that it is not for all who worship the wild beast. If the false prophet causes those who do not worship to be killed (13:15) and God torments all who do, there would be no one left to go into the millennium. The first messenger, who preaches the eonian evangel, proclaims to all (14:6, 7). The second sounds the doom of apostate Israel, in Babylon (14:8). The third warns the believers in Israel, lest they apostatize (14:9-13). Those who do are deemed worthy of the worst punishment, because they trample on the Son of God and outrage the spirit of grace (Heb. 10:26-31). Eonian torment is only for Israelitish apostates of the end time. Even we can see that Satan, the wild beast, and the false prophet, and the enlightened Hebrews who, like Judas, turn traitor to God after a solemn warning, deserve a much direr doom than the rest of mankind.

Let us not apply their sentence to all. Satan is not human. The beast and the false prophet will be super-human. The Jews who accept their mark are representatives of the nation He has chosen to uphold His worship on earth. They are enlightened. They are warned. They occupy a unique position. Had they died for their faith they would have held high honors in the kingdom.

The severity of these awful inflictions we must leave with God. To us it may seem strange to punish the dupes of Satan a thousand years before he joins them. God will do that which is best for His own glory and their good. Time is only one element. The mention of smoke in connection with the torment of the worshipers of the wild beast suggests that they will not suffer as their deceivers. It is probable that none of those who are tormented for the eons of the eons come before the great white throne for judgment. Their guilt is too clear to need adjudication and their sufferings commence before it holds its session. For them the lake of fire is never called the second death. It is this only for those who are raised to be judged before the great white throne.

Any attempt to apply figurative language concerning death to the lake of fire will not stand the test. In Romans 8:6 we read that "to be carnally minded is death." Better, "the disposition of the flesh is death". If this is the death which is the lake of fire, then all are in that lake now. All unbelievers have the flesh's disposition and all believers have a measure of it as well. Besides, the unbeliever before the great white throne has this disposition before he is cast into the lake of fire, hence the whole is reduced to meaningless words. There is no warrant for the thought that the lake will destroy or burn out the second death. It is the second death.

The lake of fire is closely associated with the last two of the four great catastrophes which mark the boundary between the five eons which comprise earth's history. Four times the earth passes through the throes of world-

wide physical destruction, to emerge into a new and different condition. Two are past and two are future.

In the past the agent of destruction was water. The disruption which we find at the very forefront of revelation leaves the earth, which was created without any seas, covered with a watery deep (Gen. 1:2). The deluge once more washed it clean of its inhabitants.

In the future the agent of destruction will be fire. In various forms it will enter into the day of wrath which precedes the millennium, and after its close the holocaust will dissolve the earth into its very elements.

It is a notable fact that the changes going on in the earth may nearly all be referred to these two media, water and fire. The first produces a physical, the second a chemical change. Fire is far more searching than water. Its action is a thousand times more thorough. It completely transforms the very constitution of that which passes through its flames. This agrees with the fact that future judgments will be infinitely more effective than those of the past, and will lead to perfection.

Both Scripture and nature agree that the earth is a storehouse of fire. We may hesitate as to the exact thickness of its solid crust, but a little reflection will convince us that most of the earth's mass must be molten and liquefied by the intense heat indicated but a short distance beneath its surface.

How frail and confined is puny man! He depends for sustenance on a thin film of soil on some of the earth's surface. The rocks will not feed him and the sand will not furnish food. Only where water and weather have oxidized the ground can he maintain his fragile life. A few feet down beneath the surface soil he finds the sphere of sulfation which is poisonous to all living substance. Still further down is the storehouse of fire waiting to engulf the world in flames unquenchable. Truly he is a prisoner in the universe, confined behind bars he cannot break.

The past is always a help in understanding the present and the future. No one wonders whether the deluge was a literal infliction or a figurative visitation. Its effect on the earth's surface is apparent in some places yet. It is found in many early legends of mankind.

Those who believe God concerning the ultimate reconciliation of the universe are concerned to find some place and some measure by which this is effected in the case of those who are judged before the great white throne. This arises from the fact that they have not thoroughly considered the character of that judgment and its sufficiency to effect the work of reconciliation, without any further aid, such as the lake of fire might afford.

It has been pressed that the lake of fire is a purging process, a disinfecting agency, calculated to rid the sinner of his sin and make him fit for God's presence. This, of course, is the purgatory of Roman Catholicism, with little modification. *Its great fault lies in that it provides a substitute for the sufferings of Christ.* Let us be clear on this: *no sufferings of the sinner can purge his sins. That is accomplished solely by the sacrifice of Christ.* Besides, the sinner *has been judged* at the great white throne, so why continue the infliction for the whole of that tremendous con?

The word *theion*, brimstone, sulphur, has been seized and given its literal signification, *divine*, to support the thought of a figurative lake of fire. But the word is always used as a noun in Scripture, and we are not warranted in the rendering *divine fire*. Literally it is *of fire and divine*, which makes no intelligible sense. The fact is that sulphur got its name from the religious use made of it in heathen lustrations. Sulphur was supposed to be a purifying agent. It is still a good disinfectant.

Needless to say, the idolators did not purify by plunging the person into fire and sulphur, nor did they even apply it to their bodies. Only one who has been burned by sulphur knows how malignant such a sore is. It

seems to defy healing. The ancients assuredly did not purify by any such means. Their method was rather to sprinkle sulphur on a torch and carry the flame thrice around the place or person to be purified. Hence they called sulphur by the name *divine*. But no such thought is ever attached to it in the Scriptures. Sodom and Gomorrah were not purified by sulphur. They were condemned. We should never allow ourselves to be driven to such expedients even if it be to support a precious doctrine. The truth needs no prop.

The vast amount of confusion on the subject of death results, in large measure, from failure to distinguish its figurative use. We make bold to say that, literally speaking, the sinner is not dead in life. Yet he is so oblivious of God that the relation between them is most aptly illustrated by comparing it to death. In the language of the simile, he is *like* one who is dead, toward God. In the stronger language of the metaphor, he is dead to God. This should not be called "spiritual" death, for his spirit is not dead. All the meaning and force of the figure comes from its likeness to literal death.

Death is always oblivion. The saints ought to have nothing to do with sin. They should be entirely oblivious of its presence. This is also expressed by calling them dead to sin. In the judgment the sinner will not be oblivious of either God or sin. He will be acutely conscious of the presence of God and of his sins. This will cease in the second death, for he will be oblivious of everything. He will be literally dead.

The fact that this is not a vivification is further impressed upon us by the studious avoidance of any reference to the spirit. At death the body returns to the soil, the soul to the unseen, the spirit to God. As a matter of fact, there could be no resurrection unless God "gives up" the *spirits* also which had returned to Him. This, we repeat, is intentionally suppressed, because the spirit does not play the principal part, as it does in the

resurrection of life. Instead, the unseen "gives up" their souls and the sea and death "give up" their bodies (20:13). "Sea" seems to be quite literal here. But "death", in addition to the sea, can mean nothing else but the places of sepulture on the land, the graves, the tombs, wherever the remains of men may be. Their bodies come from their earthly tenements, their souls return from the imperceptible. No mention is made of the spirit, which alone can bring them back to such life as they have, because this is not the resurrection of life.

In their return to death the action is reversed. Instead of death and the unseen giving up the dead, these are cast into the lake of fire. The new earth will not have a single cemetery. All death in the universe will be segregated in the devouring lake. It will be the only mausoleum in the world. Nowhere, in all creation, will the corrupting flesh of humankind taint the air or offend the ground. Nowhere else will be the need of cremating the corpses of the dead. "Death will be no more" on the new earth. All will live until death is finally abolished. Only in this fiery lake will death make its final stand, the last enemy of mankind. Therefore, it is the second death.

In the last eon death is segregated. In the consummation it is abolished. The first death cannot be the last enemy. It is the second death which has this distinction. Hence it must continue throughout the last eon. One of the special characteristics of the new earth will be the absence of death, for no one will die, and those who are dead will all be confined to the fiery lake. But when the consummation comes, when all the other foes of God and man have been subdued, then will death—the second death—yield to the life-giving power of the Christ of Golgotha. As, in Adam, all had died, so, in Christ, shall all be made alive.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 21:1-8

21 And I perceived a new heaven and a new earth, for the former heaven and the former earth pass away, and the sea is no more.

²And I perceived the holy city, new Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having been made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I hear a loud voice out of the throne saying, "*Lo! God's tabernacle is with mankind, and He will be tabernacling with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them.*" ⁴And He will be brushing away every tear from their eyes. And death will be no more, nor mourning, nor clamor, nor misery: they will be no more, seeing that the former things passed away."

⁵And He who is sitting on the throne said, "*Lo! I am making all new!*" And He is saying, "Write, for these sayings are faithful and true." ⁶And He said to me: "*I have become the A and the Z, the Origin and the Consummation. To him who is thirsting I shall be giving of the spring of the water of life gratuitously.*" ⁷He who is conquering will be enjoying these things and I shall be his God and *he* will be a son of Mine. ⁸Yet the timid, and unbelievers, and the abominable, and murderers and paramours, and enchanterers and idolaters, and all the false—their part is in the lake burning with fire and sulphur, which is the second death."

THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

A GLANCE at the literary framework will show us that we have now arrived at the climax of the Unveiling of Jesus Christ. After the Introduction (1:1-3), we considered the Messages to the Ecclesias (1:4-3:22) where He appears as Prophet. We have followed the Throne section (4:1-11:18), with its seals and trumpets and thunders, in which He is established as earth's Potentate. We have studied the Temple division (11:19-20:15), in which He becomes earth's Priest. The remaining two chapters are a reversal of this order. There is a short Temple division (chapter 21), a brief Throne section (22:1-5), followed by another Message to the Ecclesias (22:6-17), and the formal Conclusion (22:18-21).

There are however, contrasts as well as similarities in the corresponding sections which we might miss unless we compare them with each other. The previous Temple section restores the worship of Jehovah to a literal house in the thousand years. Now there is no temple except the Lord God Almighty and the Lambkin. In the former Throne section lightning and thunder issued out of the throne and dealt out God's indignation. Now a river of life issues forth from the throne, distributing blessing. The Messages are, however, in the same tenor. The Introduction and Conclusion have both a likeness and a contrast. In the first there is a blessing on the reader. In the second there is a curse on the multilator of the book. Both emphasize the swiftness of His coming.

THE DAY OF GOD

This crisis in the Unveiling introduces us to a different "day". The present is Man's Day (1 Cor. 4:3). All of the action in the former half of the Unveiling was in Jehovah's Day (1:10). Now we enter the Day of God. At present man is supreme, for God is allowing him to prove his incapacity. Jehovah alone will be exalted in His day. He is the God of Israel. All blessing to the nations will come through them. As we shall see, the Deity comes much closer to mankind in the Day of God.

THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

In the Scriptures we are told of three heavens and three earths, of which John sees the third in this vision. We are living in the second. The first comes before us in the opening strain of Genesis. "In the beginning God creates the heavens and the earth." This was the original creation, which was *not* created the waste which it later became (Isa. 45:18). A great cataclysm is indicated in the second verse. The earth became waste and sterile. This is followed by the renewal of the earth, the formation of its seas, the creation of its flora and fauna, including mankind. It is with this second earth that the greater part of revelation is concerned.

The fate of the second earth has already come before us. Both earth and heaven fled from the face of the great white throne (Un. 20:11). A more detailed account is given us by Peter in his second epistle (3:10). He tells us that the heavens shall be passing by with a booming noise, yet the elements will be dissolved by combustion, and the earth and the works in it will be discovered, or burned up. All these, then, being dissolved, he exhorts them to hope for and hurry the presence of the day of God, because of which the heavens, being on fire, will be dissolved and the elements decomposed by combustion. Such is the outlook in the day of Jehovah. Then, according to His promise, they will hope for new heavens and a

new earth, where righteousness will dwell (2 Pet. 3:13).

The two great cataclysms which commence and close the career of the present earth are the outstanding milestones in universal history. To grasp God's dealings with creation we must give them their proper place in the progressive unfolding of His purpose. They are the great monuments to the method of God's movements. Things have not continued as they were at the beginning of creation, nor will they run on as they are to the end. The great changes are not effected by gradual evolution, but by sudden cataclysmic catastrophes. So revolutionary are these two world disasters that from each emerges a new heaven and a new earth.

The present condition of the earth's crust is ample evidence that it has passed through tremendous convulsions. If all the strata were horizontal and all followed some standard order of deposition, there might be some faint evidence in favor of evolution. But the strata are in the utmost confusion. They are tilted at all angles with no regard to order. Moreover, the logical condition of the present earth, if it were the product of evolution, would be a uniform plain at the bottom of a universal ocean. Yet even this would not answer the demands of the hypothesis, for there could be no further deposits to continue the process.

Let us mark the contrast between the destruction of the first earth by water (Gen. 1:2) and the incineration of the second by fire. The past was a physical regeneration. The future will be a chemical recreation. Both are purifying agents, but fire is far more effective than water. There was no water, in the form of seas, on the first earth. The word earth, in the original languages, always refers to the dry land. It was, therefore, a most unexpected means of destruction. The fluid may have been stored above the earth in the form of rings, like those of Saturn. The fire of the future is stored within the earth (2 Pet. 3:7). It merely needs some mighty

upheaval to put the planet into the crucible of the great Alchemist, to purge it and make it a permanent habitation for the human race.

The physical changes on the present earth are mostly due to these two elements, fire and water. Water alone would soon sink into the seas. The heat of the sun raises it to its ceaseless round. It draws the moisture into the sky and distributes it over the land. It disintegrates the rocks, and grinds down the mountains and washes the soil into the sea. All is impermanent, changing. This is a picture of God's present processes in the moral sphere. In the future earth there will be permanence. There will be no sea. The stones will be flinty, indestructible. All of this matches the moral stability of the final creation.

The present controversy between modernism and fundamentalism, evolution and the Bible will arrive nowhere unless both sides get down to the facts. The man of faith rightly objects when the hypotheses and theories of science are presented as if they were truths. Yet it seldom seems to have occurred to him that he, too, is building on translations and traditions which have no more foundation than the speculations of materialists. What is needed is more real science in the study of the Scriptures. A concordant version may rightly be called a "scientific" translation, for it is based on the facts found in the ancient manuscripts, arranged and classified for study. This differs just as much from ordinary methods of translation as the experimental research laboratory of today surpasses the grotto of an ancient alchemist.

Scientists claim that the Bible is not "scientific". In reality it is too much so, that is, its translators have been too strongly influenced by the scientific opinions of their own day, and have altered its plain meaning to conform it to current conceptions. When the A. V. was made the popular theory was that all creation began with chaos. As it was a venerable and respectable superstition, handed down from the Greeks and the Egyptians,

the translators seized on the apparent confirmation found in the first chapter of Genesis to make its cosmology acceptable to the intellectual leaders of their time. That, I suppose, is just what scientists would like us to do today. Their idea is to change the Bible so as to set it on the shifting sands of scientific speculation.

That our translators actually believed the scientific theory of primeval chaos, current in their generation, is evident from their translation of the two descriptive terms *theu* and *ben* in the opening verses of Genesis. The first they render "without form". I have striven hard to conjure up a mental picture of an earth "without form", but it seems quite impossible to do so. I can imagine all sorts of shapes, spiral, spheroid, or simply fantastic figures such as we see in cloudland, but I have come to the conclusion that an earth "without form" is a contradiction in terms, and that all the confusion and chaos was in the minds of the translators, rather than in the earth or in the sacred text. In rendering it "waste" I am simply following their example in Deuteronomy 32:10. They also render it *vain, nothing, wilderness, empty place, thing of naught, vanity, and confusion*.

So with the word "void". Try it over in your own mind. "The earth was void." What does it mean? We speak jocularly of mental vacuity as an "aching void", but this is not a joke. This is not a figure of speech. The earth became something, not nothing. Strictly speaking "without form and void" must imply annihilation (if such a thing be), and we have the illogical outcome that creation produced nothing as a foundation for further developments. The only void which a microscopical examination of the facts will reveal existed, not in the earth, not in the text, but in the minds that imagined it to be necessary to conform God's Word to the learned ignorance of the day. At a later time the prophet Jeremiah sees the land of Israel, and it was "without form and void", much as it has lain for many hundreds of

years since his days. But if a traveler used such words in describing it he would excite suspicion as to his sanity. It has been waste and sterile.

What does "void" mean elsewhere? It occurs in the illuminating phrase "stones of sterility" (Isa. 34:11). There are parts of Palestine, notably in the wild region between Jerusalem and the Dead sea, where the stones are so thickly strewn over the surface that vegetation cannot get a ground hold. They are called "stones of sterility" because they effectually hinder the growth of any plant life, leaving the ground a white waste of wilderness. So was the desolated earth. It was covered with water, which stifled all its life.

These two words are carefully selected by the Author, not to describe a mythical chaos, but as a contrast to the ensuing week of work. One half of the period of restoration is devoted to the repair of the "waste" by reducing the cataclysmic mixture of solids, fluids, and gases to their separate layers, or spheres. When the dry land, the waters, and the atmosphere find their proper levels the earth is no longer a "waste". The second descriptive term, "sterile," finds its corrective in the last days of the week. Verdure and soul life, flora and fauna, crowned by the advent of a human being, redeem the earth from being "sterile".

It is evident that a really scientific translation of this, the oldest and greatest of all cosmic formulas, definitely confirms the thought implied in the term *cosmos*, or world. God created a system, a world, not a chaos. He began with an earth, not a cloud of star dust. He inaugurated His grand designs with heavens which, though they still appear to be spread forth in careless disarray, are in reality the most stupendous exhibition of system and law which the human mind has ever been called upon to contemplate. Whatever may be the shifting, nebulous theories of science as to the beginning of the cosmic order of the universe, the records in the rocks and the

stupendous upheavals in the strata are but the lower notes in the great hymn which celebrates a perfect creation followed by world-wide wreck and ruin.

True science, as well as revelation, is cataclysmic. It tells us that there were times when this earth's crust was subject to severe convulsions, so that the strata are jumbled together at all angles and positions. Let any geologist seek to fit Lyell's straightjacket on the tumbling mountains and heaving plains and he will soon find out how stubborn the strata are. They refuse to conform to the dogmatic geology of a few years ago, which is still taught by book scholars who worship at the shrine of obsolete, embalmed scientific lore. Ask an old prospector, a miner, or any delver into the heart of the hills. Ask one who has learned their secrets in their very bosoms. Ask the leading geologists, who have forgotten what they were taught and have learned afresh at the fountain-head. All will agree that the earth has been visited by great cataclysmic catastrophes. One occurred at the deluge, but the greatest is recorded at the forefront of revelation (Gen. 1:2).

It is not until the deluge that we read of seasons. Then the promise is made that, while the present earth remains, cold and heat and summer and winter shall not cease (Gen. 8:22). These seasonal changes have affected mankind far more than we realize. They are not normal, and seem to have shortened the span of human life. They are known only on the present, the second earth. They may be much modified in the millennium. The rendering "seasons" in the first chapter of Genesis (1:14) is misleading. The heavenly luminaries do not produce the seasons. The word means appointments.

The third earth, we may surmise, will restore the creation perfection of the first. We know that this is true in one particular, for the sea is no more (21:1). This will multiply its habitable area. If the polar axis is normal, this will add vast belts near the poles to the use

of mankind. Indeed, we have little doubt that almost everything which at present hinders humanity's fullest enjoyment of its earthly home will be absent in this new creation. The physical is a parable of the spiritual. The sea, today, pictures the turbulent unrest of the nations. Its absence in the day of God corresponds with their solid rest in Him. This leads us to consider the spiritual aspect of this new creation, of which the material is but an intimation.

RITUAL RETIRES

Strange as it may seem, the special blessings of the new earth arise from the fact that there is no temple. God no longer hides Himself from mankind. Christ's Melchisedek priesthood was for only one eon, not "for ever". The nations no longer have a hesitant approach through the mediacy of Israel. In the thrilling words of the throne, "*Lo! God's tabernacle is with mankind, and He will be tabernacling with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them. And He will be brushing away every tear from their eyes. And death will be no more, nor mourning, nor clamor, nor misery: they will be no more, seeing that the former things passed away*" (21:3, 4).

The passing of priesthood is prophetic. If God can do away with the divine means of approach to Him, why cannot He also dispense with the regulation of human conduct? If intermediaries are no longer needed for worship, why should it not be possible to govern without delegate authority? The Unveiling does not lead us to this goal. It is beyond its scope. But we know that the throne of the Son of God is only for the eon of the eon (Heb. 1:8), at the end of which He hands over the kingdom to God, at the consummation, when all sovereignty and authority and power are abrogated (1 Cor. 15:24). Meanwhile, the great glory of the final eon is God's conciliation of mankind. *In spirit*, we have this now. But then He will remove all barriers between Himself and

all mankind. Israel's priestly functions cease. God no longer needs intermediaries between Himself and the race.

As if in anticipation of the skepticism which refuses these glorious predictions, John is assured of their future fulfillment (21:5-8). This paragraph is an interlude, a statement of facts from the standpoint of Patmos, rather than a continuation of the vision. These things are faithful and true because they are spoken by Him Who is the Origin of all and Who will be the Consummation of what He begins. Figuratively, He is the first and last letters of the alphabet, the Alpha and Omega of the Greek, the A and the Z of the English. He, therefore, promises the water of life gratuitously to the thirsty, and the enjoyment of the blessings of the last eon to those who conquer. But the timid and unbelievers, and the abominable, and murderers, and paramours, and enchanters, and idolators, and all the false—their place is in the second death.

It is evident that the list given here refers to the past. Such people will not be found in the new earth. There is nothing to conquer. There is no need of faith, for all is open to sight. This paragraph is a warning to Israel and the nations (whose salvation is not based on pure grace, as at present) that only those of approved character will find their place in this paradise. All those who are unworthy are segregated and spend this final eon in the death state in the lake of fire.

What a flood of light is thrown upon the cause of our sorrows and our miseries by the method of their cure! The absence of God is the real reason for all our woes. Then, when God tabernacles with mankind, their tears will be brushed away. His presence will banish death, with all its fears and heartaches. No mourning for loved ones, no clamor of the bereaved, no misery or loneliness. All these pass away because God will come down to men and they will be in touch with Him.

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 21:9-27

⁹And one of the seven messengers who have the seven bowls brimming with the last seven calamities came and talks with me, saying, "*Hither!* I shall be showing you the bride, the wife of the Lambkin." ¹⁰And he carries me away, in spirit, on a mountain, huge and high, and shows me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God; ¹¹having the glory from God; her luminosity is like a stone most precious, as a crystalline jasper gem; ¹²having a wall, huge and high; having twelve portals, and at the portals twelve messengers, and their names inscribed, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. ¹³From the east are three portals, and from the north three portals, and from the south three portals, and from the west three portals. ¹⁴And the wall of the city has twelve foundations, and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lambkin. ¹⁵And he who is talking with me had a golden measuring reed, in order that he should be measuring the city, and its portals, and its wall. ¹⁶And the city is lying four-square; and its length is as much as the breadth. And he measures the city with the reed—twelve thousand stadia [1378.97 miles]. Its length and breadth and height are equal. ¹⁷And he measures its wall, a hundred forty-four cubits [about 200 feet] of a man, which the messenger's measure is. ¹⁸And the buttress of its wall is jasper, and the city is clear gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹The foundations of the city's wall have been adorned with every precious stone, the first foundation with jasper, the second lapis lazuli, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh topaz, the eighth beryl, the ninth peridot, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh amethyst, the twelfth garnet. And the twelve portals are twelve pearls. ²¹Each one of the portals was respectively of one pearl. And the city square is gold, clear as translucent glass.

²²And I perceived no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lambkin are its temple. ²³And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon that they should be appearing in it, for the glory of God illuminates it, and its Lamp is the Lambkin.

²⁴And the nations will be walking by means of its light, and the kings of the earth are carrying their glory into it. ²⁵And its portals should under no circumstances be locked by day (for there will be no night there). ²⁶And they will be carrying the glory and the honor of the nations into it, ²⁷and under no circumstances may anything contaminating, or one who is making an abomination and a lie be entering into it, except those having been written in the Lambkin's scroll of life.

THE BRIDE OF THE LAMBKIN

THE faithful in Israel are often found under covenant relationship with Jehovah. In the realm of feeling and affection this is figured by the marriage bond. Israel was the wife of Jehovah. Those who receive the Messiah are the bride of the Lambkin. As God's supreme aim is to unite His creatures to Himself by links of love, this may be considered as the highest aspect of Israel's relationship to their God. He uses the transient experience of earth's highest bliss to figure the permanent felicity of His people.

Not only was Israel brought into the bondage of the law at Sinai, but she also was bound to Jehovah as His wife. He became her Husband (Jer. 31:32). Then it was that He put upon her His comeliness (Eze. 16:8-14). Not only did they break the law in minor matters, but they failed in the very first commandment. Instead of loving Him with all their hearts and souls, they forsook Him and sought solace with His enemies (Hos. 2:6-13). This is what led to the divorce (Deut. 24:1-4) which caused them to go into captivity. According to the law, they forfeited all right to be His again. But the law of love is higher than the law of Sinai. That was given partly because of the hardness of their hearts. Jehovah's heart is not hardened by the failure of His people. Even though divorced, He invites her to return to Him (Jer. 3:1).

He not only gave His word to wait for her, but promises to do far more than that. In her inconstancy she is liable to be drawn after anyone who will comfort her sorrowing soul. So He engages to keep her for Himself until she becomes His again in the latter days. Jehovah will not marry another, nor will He allow Israel to do so. They are betrothed from of old. "Thou shalt not be for another man, so will I also be for thee" (Hos. 3). This troth, plighted by Jehovah, not only for Himself, but also for her, must find fulfillment. He will not break His word. He cannot take a wife to Himself from the nations. To make them the bride would be a breach of promise more dreadful far than the defection of His people. His character would suffer beyond repair. His word would be worthless. The nations do not usurp the place of faithful Israel. We have no part in the new Jerusalem.

When our Lord came, the nation as a whole was faithless. They were not only a wicked but an *adulterous* generation, for they had forsaken Jehovah. Only those who received Him were restored to their former relationship. They became, not merely the *wife* of Jehovah, but the *bride* of the Lambkin. It is not a renewal of the old legal bonds, a sad reunion in old age of those who have been long estranged, but a new and fresh relationship, with youth regained. John the baptist introduced the bride to her Bridegroom when he told his disciples, "He Who has the bride is the Bridegroom." The twelve apostles were the nucleus of that goodly company of faithful Israelites, who, with all her saints of former times, will be united with the Lambkin in the coming eons, under the figure of the marriage covenant.

THE WEDDING OF THE LAMBKIN

In the Unveiling, this glorious company of the saints of the Circumcision, who have eonian salvation, and who are made alive in the former resurrection or are saved through the great affliction, comes before us under the

figure of a marriage feast. In Israel a wedding was celebrated seven days. The nuptials of the Lambkin will last a thousand years. Just as at Cana of Galilee, where He first showed forth His glory, the water for cleansing will be transformed into inexhaustible joy. There will be a ceaseless celebration throughout the millennium. This enduring felicity is brought before us in the Unveiling in connection with the fall of false Babylon. The luxurious pleasures of the apostate Jews are short lived and are ended by the awful outpouring of Jehovah's jealous rage. With this lurid background we read of the wedding of the Lambkin.

The hallelujah chorus which follows the judgment of the apostates will merge into the marriage march of the faithful. John heard as it were a vast throng, as the sound of voluminous waters, as the rolling of heavy thunder, saying, "*Hallelujah! for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns! We may be rejoicing and exulting and will be giving glory to Him, seeing that the wedding of the Lambkin came, and Its bride makes herself ready*" (19:6, 7).

"And to her it was granted that she should be clothed in clean, resplendent cambric, for the cambric is the just awards of the saints." Hitherto all of Israel's special dispensations of blessing have been spoiled by her subsequent conduct. The nation never lived up to her privileges. Now, however, with a new heart, with God's law inscribed within (Jer. 31:33), they will walk in His ways and respond to His love. Moreover, these are the faithful in Israel, who will be rewarded for their acts, and decorated for their devotion to Jehovah when the mass of the nation was apostate.

"And he is saying to me, 'Write, "Happy are they who have been invited to the wedding dinner of the Lambkin." ' ' ' (19:9). The other nations, who otherwise appear as subjects of the kingdom, are here presented in the appropriate rôle of guests at the wedding

banquets. In the literal feasts, the hospitality was most generous. At Cana, where our Lord was one of those invited, the guests drank all the wine there was, and did not hesitate to taste the new supply. So will be the joys of the kingdom. Israel will not, as in the past, jealously withhold all for herself. Her joy will overflow and the nations will be happy, indeed, who share her millennial bliss.

THE LAMBKIN

Our Lord is called the Lamb of God in the first chapter of John's gospel (verses 29 and 36). He is compared to a lamb in Acts 8:32 and 1 Peter 1:19. *Why did not the spirit of God use this word in the Unveiling? Because it fails to convey the full thought.* Amnos, or arên is a lamb, but arnion is a little lamb, or lambkin. It is only as we see the corresponding rejuvenation—from wife to bride—that we can fully enjoy the preciousness of this diminutive. In the usual course of nature the wife of Jehovah should grow old and decrepit, and look back with regret to the days of her youth. God reverses this with Israel. The future holds more of youthful exultation than the past. The wife becomes the bride. And so the Lamb also becomes the Lambkin. It is a precious truth exquisitely expressed.

Submission and sacrifice are associated with Him as the Lamb. These are not uppermost in this scroll. It is gentleness, weakness, utter defenselessness and youth which is suggested by the Lambkin. How sublime is the contrast between the powers of evil and the power of God! A monstrous dragon leads the hosts of darkness to defeat. A little Lambkin leads the legions of light to victory. The weakness of God is stronger than the most powerful confederacy of His creatures.

THE NEW JERUSALEM

Much is made of the millennium, and it will doubtless surpass the highest expectations. Yet it is surprising to

note how little is said in the Unveiling of Israel's millennial marriage feast compared with the sumptuous description of the new Jerusalem, the bride of the Lambkin, in the succeeding eon on the new earth. The thousand years seem to be but the prelude to the more glorious splendors of that concluding era. It is the climax of all the prophetic promises. It fulfills all that God has in store for His beloved nation.

When John perceived the new heaven and the new earth his attention seems to have been immediately taken by the sight of the holy city descending out of heaven and coming to rest upon the earth. Like all the blessings of Israel, the city is heavenly in character but not in location. Abraham, the beginning of the Hebrew nation, waited for a city having the foundations, whose Artisan and Architect is God (Heb. 11:10). His faith is not fulfilled until the consummation of Israel's highest destiny in the new earth. Since David's day they have had Jerusalem, the city of the great King. It has been dearer to them than the promised land. It has been the symbol of their fortunes. It will be their eonian home.

Again we are powerfully impressed by the figure of marriage. The city is as a bride adorned for her husband (21:2). Before this they have been married for more than a thousand years. Is it not time to leave the wedding festivities for the sober and serious and sordid service of life? Is it not time to lay aside the bridal robes for the dress of duty? Is it not time to put by her ornaments? Not so! The new Jerusalem is permanently dressed and adorned with the supreme symbols of youth and happiness. She shall never grow old! Her marriage festivities were prolonged for the thousand years. Now her wedding day is lengthened for the eon of the cons. Literally, there will be no night. Figuratively, the joy and exultation of her union with the Lambkin will continue to the consummation.

A second time we are reminded of the awful contrast

between the fate of the faithless in Babylon and the felicity of the faithful in the new Jerusalem. One of the seven messengers who have the seven bowls brimming with the last seven calamities is chosen to show John the holy city. We are strongly inclined to think that he is the seventh messenger, who pours out his bowl on the air, for under this visitation the cities of the nations fall and great Babylon is brought to remembrance before God (16: 17-19). This messenger carries John, in spirit, to a high mountain to show him "the bride, the wife of the Lamb-kin". How insistent is the asseveration of the perpetual youth and continued felicity of these two, the antitype of all happy lovers!

The sense of permanence and glorious beauty is confirmed by the actual constitution of the city. It is a jeweled masterpiece of enduring gems, flashing with loveliness and radiant with light. The latest experiments with radio-active substances seem to point back to a time when the earth was luminous and composed of minerals of much higher grade than at present. But this energy has been dissipated without being replenished. The earth is disintegrating and very little of its outward mass is still luminous in the dark. The holy city is not only set with the most precious gems, and is itself translucent gold, but these are refulgent with God's glory, luminous with divine light.

A LUMINOUS JASPER

The ancients gave the name *jashpeh* (Hebrew) or *iaspis* (Greek) to a considerable variety of precious stones. Pliny mentions fourteen kinds of jasper, from sea-green to sky-blue in color. The green stones, which were the most common, were sometimes transparent. They resemble the emerald, but are not so bright and are more opaque. The crystalline jasper of the Unveiling is doubtless the same as the modern *plasma*, a translucent, green chalcedony, the most valuable variety of jasper. This

was also the twelfth stone in the breastplate of the high priest (Ex. 28:20), and forms the buttress and adorns the first course of the foundations of the holy city (21:18, 19).

As we are told that the city has no need of luminaries, such as the sun and moon (Un. 21:23), we are constrained to translate *phōstêr*, which usually means luminary, luminosity (21:11). The city has the glory of God. Her luminosity is like a stone most precious, as a crystalline jasper gem. We are reminded that the Enthroned One looked like a jasper stone and a carnelian (4:3). The city glows with the very glory of God. Though scintillating with many colored gems, as a whole it is suffused with a verdant light, the hue of peace and of repose. It shimmers like a star, blessing the beholder with its beams.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE CITY

We are distinctly told that the Architect of this city is God Himself. Jerusalem has had samples of His skill in the past. The tabernacle in the wilderness was the most marvelous portable building ever constructed. It was not only splendid with gold and silver and richly colored curtains, but the design of its walls made it the most rigid structure possible, yet very light to carry. The three walls were shaped like slim inverted V's, the inner boards leaning against the outer, locked together by the bars, one of which ran through the rings of both where they met in the hollow space between them. This has been recently rediscovered by an accurate concordant study of the Hebrew. Here we have the first hint of the pyramidal form which we find in the new Jerusalem. Solomon's marvelous structure was of divine design. In the future, the temple revealed to Ezekiel will be built in the holy oblation. But the city of that day will be constructed in accord with human plans. Hence it never is a permanent city. The faithful will still look forward to

a future one (Heb. 13:14). No human architect could design a city suited to the needs of a nation for many millenniums. No mortal mind could conceive a home for myriads on a scale so impossible or a cost so unattainable. Indeed, who would house them in a city? Under present conditions they would almost need the whole earth to themselves.

At the present time men have come nearer to the idea embodied in the new Jerusalem than ever before. Their great cities are more congested. Their buildings are more mountainous. Indeed, the present trend in large structures is to surround a central peak with smaller heights in imitation of nature's hills. But there is a limit to this plan, for men do not live in these monstrous monoliths, but spend only a part of their time there. They must be filled and emptied once or twice a day. No modern city, however wide its thoroughfares, is arranged for the moving of great masses of humanity. We have nearly reached the limit in such structures in the greatest of our cities.

But the great Architect is not baffled by the stupendous problem. Its shape, its size, its materials, are all beyond mortal imagination. The city, with its square, is made of gold (21:18, 21). This is so staggering that it stuns our imaginations. Yet this statement falls far short of giving us a true idea of its appearance. Gold, such as we know it, is opaque and yellow. The gold of the new Jerusalem will be translucent and iridescent. I once held my breath in admiration as I observed a button of gold fresh from the furnace. I could see right through it. Instead of being a solid yellow, it seemed alive with all the colors of the rainbow. I was told that it could be made so permanently by means of tremendous heat. It looked like a translucent pearl in a shimmering golden mist. What marvelous material for making a metropolis!

Gold is bright and lustrous, but I cannot say that a city of such yellow metal reaches the highest flights of

my imagination. But a city of glass-like gold, with delicate tints of every hue discovering themselves in pearly iridescence, luminous with its own light, is far beyond the most daring dreams of mortals. The other colors modify the gold, so that the city does not appear yellow, but has a greenish glow. This is the material of which the city is built. Yet, as if this were but common stuff, the foundations of its walls are inlaid with costly gems, its buttresses are jasper, and its portals, each a single pearl. What bride was ever jeweled with such gems?

THE PLAN OF THE CITY

The striking feature of the new Jerusalem is its height. This is the same as its length and its breadth, which are equal. It cannot be a cube, because the wall which surrounds it is exceedingly low in comparison with the city's elevation. The only geometrical figure which seems possible under the specifications is a pyramid. Its height may be equal to one side, and yet it may be surrounded by a low wall (21:16, 17). No other shape seems to satisfy the description. This greatly enhances its grandeur and beauty. It will be like that city, set on a hill, which cannot be hid. We may be sure that it is not intended to be concealed, but to impress all creation with God's love for His earthly people, Israel.

The size of this city is in full accord with its purpose. It will be the home of all the faithful in the chosen nation. It would need a tremendous city to do this even if the thousand years did not multiply the saints in Israel into an innumerable host. Then they will be crowded into the land given to Abraham, from the Mediterranean to the Persian gulf, from Asia Minor to the river of Egypt. The new Jerusalem will have an area much greater than the whole land in the millennium. Its possibilities are so stupendous that it will provide for the increasing population throughout the eon of the eons.

The messenger measured the city with a golden meas-

uring reed. All of its dimensions are multiples of twelve, the number of divine administration, for this city is earth's capital as well as its metropolis. It is twelve thousand stadia on each side. At eight stadia to each mile, this is fifteen hundred Roman miles. These are somewhat shorter than English miles, making each side of the city about one thousand three hundred and seventy-nine miles. Supposing that the messenger measures its height on the surface, rather than its geometrical perpendicular, we have four triangles with this base and height. This gives the city just twice as much area as if it were flat. This supplies a surface of nearly four million (3,803,282) square miles.

As compared with the former cities we find the same factors, roughly multiples or powers of twelve. The millennial city will be about twelve times as large on each side as the Jerusalem of the past. That is, it will be one hundred and forty-four times as great. And the new Jerusalem, because of its shape, will be more than 144×144 times as great as the city of Ezekiel's vision. As this is beyond our mathematical power to conceive, we must seek other means to impress its size on our intellects.

To bring this home to our minds, let us compare it with some dimensions with which we are familiar. The Amazon, the largest of earth's rivers, drains a basin not much larger than the holy city. The Mississippi basin is only half as large. Perhaps the nearest well known equivalent is the United States. Yet the holy city will be considerably larger even than that great country. Only those who have explored some of its vast open spaces realize how far it is from being crowded with inhabitants. If it were all a city, like congested New York, or even like open Los Angeles, the number of inhabitants might be computed in figures, but they would be beyond our comprehension. The mass of the mountain on which it stands would be about the same as that of the moon.

THE CITY WALL

Does it not seem strange, at first, to find this city surrounded by a high wall? It is not a temple wall to shut the nations from God's presence, as of old, for God is outside also, tabernacling with them (21:3). It is a city wall, which, in olden time, shut out enemies and protected its inhabitants. But it has no battlements and is not needed for defense. Its portals are never closed. This was always done at night in fortified cities hitherto. But there is no night on this luminous mountain. What need is there for a wall?

The city wall is the symbol of the sovereignty of the favored nation. They live within, and enjoy its splendors. The nations are without, and count it a rare privilege to enter its pearly portals. They bring their glory and honor into it, as a tribute to its power and a pledge of fealty to its people. Israel's priestly work is past, but the kingly reign continues to the close of the eons. The wall marks the boundary between a sovereign city and its alien subjects. The throne of God and the Lambkin will be in it. Glorious as it is, this is not the "final state". There is still insubordination sufficient to call for the reign of the saints. Only when all rule is abrogated will the consummation come.

THE TWELVE FOUNDATIONS

Usually the foundations of a city wall are sunk beneath the surface, where no adornment is wasted on them. The foundations of this wall are not only visible, but resplendent with gems of every kind. It is only recently that we are beginning to arrive at clear ideas as to the precious stones fitted in to this foundation. A brief note on each will help us to visualize the appalling richness and splendor lavished on the substructure of the city's walls. How high the foundation will be, or how arranged, we do not know. Above it towers the wall to the height of one hundred forty-four cubits.

I. JASPER

The first foundation is adorned with jasper, the prevailing tone of the city as a whole (21:11). This, as we have already seen, may be that precious variety of jasper now called plasma.

II. LAPIS LAZULI

The second foundation is adorned with a stone called *sappir* in Hebrew and *sappheiros* in Greek. From all the evidence, however, it appears that the name sapphire is now applied to quite a different stone. Now it is a blue corundum, then it was used of a stone "having the dust of gold" (Job 28:6). This is the characteristic feature of blue stone, or lapis lazuli. Its color is ultramarine, and it is sprinkled with metal specks which look like gold.

III. CHALCEDONY

The third foundation is adorned with chalcedony. The name is the same in the Greek, and occurs only here in the Scriptures. Pliny, in his Natural History, is one of the chief sources of information on this subject. He describes it as wax-like and translucent, varying from white to bluish grey.

IV. EMERALD

The third stone on the breastplate of the high priest was probably an emerald. It and the carbuncle have been transposed in our public versions. The Hebrew name refers to its flashing. It has such a vivid, velvet tone, that its name is used for its special shade of green. This was used to decorate the fourth foundation.

V. SARDONYX

The gems in the fifth foundation were probably similar to the sixth for both are called *sard* in the Greek. This is our carnelian. *Oynx* means *claw*, and tells us that streaks in this stone had the color of a claw, or a finger nail. It consists of alternate layers of light colored onyx

and deeper red carnelian, giving a beautiful striped effect.

VI. CARNELIAN

In ancient times the *sard* included the modern blood red carnelian. The first stone in the breastplate of the high priest was called by a name which means *red*. It is probably the same stone that we find here in the sixth foundation. It was the color of bright blood.

VII. TOPAZ

True yellow topaz has a color and luster very close to burnished gold. It is probably the "gold-stone" of the ancients, rather than the modern stone of the same name. Chrysolite (Greek, gold-stone) is a light greenish yellow. The topaz would appear on the seventh foundation like inlaid gold.

VIII. BERYL

At present the name beryl is applied to a family of stones of various colors, such as green, blue, yellow, pink, and white. Pliny says that it is a light green. This would make it similar to an emerald, but lighter in shade.

IX. PERIDOT

Late investigation seems to have shown that the ancient *topazion* was not the same as the modern stone so called. Pliny says that the finest topazes are green and comparatively soft, while the modern gem is very hard. This describes our "evening emerald", or peridot. These stones nearly all come from an island in the Red sea. In ancient times they came from Ethiopia (Job 28:19). It is probable that this is the second stone in the high priest's breastplate, which the common versions transliterate from the Greek, topaz.

X. CHRYSOPRASE

The chrysoprase, as its name implies, has the greenish tint of a leek with a golden cast. It adorned the tenth foundation.

XI. AMETHYST

The Greek name is *hyacinth*, and probably was anciently given to a purplish stone like the wild bloom. This seems to suit the modern amethyst.

XII. GARNET

Judging by its name, UN-DRUNK, the ancient *amethyst* was probably somewhat the color of wine. Pliny says that it was so called because it did not come up to the color of wine. Another story is that it was the color of wine mixed with water, which would not cause drunkenness. The color of this and the preceding stone remind the student of the tapestry of the tabernacle, almost all of which was in shades of violet or purple. As the preceding stone is the modern amethyst, this one is probably the modern garnet.

The brilliant effect of these flashing gems can scarcely be imagined. Above the lower foundations the stones seem to form a jeweled rainbow. We have almost all the colors of the spectrum, the red, the yellow, the green, and the purple in the same order as we see them in the sky. Only the blue is missing. Perhaps this is intended to symbolize the fact that this city is founded on the earthly promises of God. The blues are beneath this, and may intimate that these promises of immunity from further doom are heavenly. They come from the azure, celestial vault, whence the city itself had its origin. Some day we shall revel in the spiritual significance of these things as we now delight in the splendor of the sight.

Precious stones are imperishably permanent, but the names given to them are often vague and unstable. The ancient terms often included a variety of kinds as well as colors. This is true even today, and is what makes this list so difficult to determine. We have consulted the latest investigations and feel quite confident that it is sufficiently correct to give us a colorful and realistic vision

of the splendors God has lavished on the holy city. May it help us to worship and adore our God whenever we behold these jewels and note their beauty, their rarity and their costliness. He is able to deck His bride as no earthly lover ever dreamed of doing!

That this city is solely for the Circumcision saints is placed beyond all question by the names on its foundations. The twelve apostles have this high honor. None of the later apostles are recognized. Paul, the greatest of them all, is altogether outside of this scene. And it is well that he should be absent. Paul would make a poor foundation for a wall between the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision. He would wreck it all, for one of his most precious revelations is figured by the demolition of the temple wall that stood between them. Let us never associate his name with a wall that in any sense marks the barrier between Jew and gentile. He brings them into a new humanity where no such wall can be. The new Jerusalem is still in the old humanity.

THE PEARLY PORTALS

Perhaps pearl was the most precious substance known to the ancients. It cost the merchant all that he had to purchase one very precious pearl (Mat. 13:46). It is used as a symbol of believing Israel, the most valuable of all God's treasures on the earth. A large pearl is almost priceless. The value of a pearl more than an inch in diameter is fabulous. How staggering is the statement that the portals of the new Jerusalem are each a single pearl! Each one represents the wealth of a world. Twelve of them, matched! It stuns the imagination.

The names of God's beloved earthly people are written on every approach to this magnificent metropolis. On each gate is inscribed the name of one of the tribes of the sons of Israel. Only these have a right to enter unbidden and unchallenged. The city is theirs. Its adornments are those of the bride of the Lambkin. The

nations enter only at their invitation. As in Ezekiel's city, of the previous millennial era, there are three gates on each side: Then Reuben, Judah, and Levi are on the north; Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan are on the east; Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun are on the the south; and Gad, Asher, and Naphtali are on the west (Eze. 48: 31-34). Some such order may apply to the portals of the new Jerusalem.

Doubtless every detail in the description of the holy city has its spiritual significance. To interpret these aright requires unusual insight. Yet who would understand the interpretation? Hitherto, attempts to "spiritualize" this scene have changed it to a fable. All efforts to "apply" it to ourselves have made it into a myth. It is, first of all, a glorious reality. It is not heaven in any sense, for it comes down out of heaven to the earth. It is not the home of any gentile saints, much less those of today, whose destiny is in that empyrean whence this city will descend. It is literal, for it is the explanation of a figure. The bride of the Lambkin is the holy city, new Jerusalem.

When we visualize this jeweled city, and remember that ours is a still nearer and dearer place in His affections, our imaginations are stirred, and we begin to realize a little of the truth of the apostle's words: "That which the eye perceived not, and the ear hears not, and to which the heart of man ascended not—whatever God makes ready for those who are loving Him" (1 Cor. 2:9). By His spirit God reveals to us that we as members of the body of Christ, will possess, in the empyrean, a glory and grandeur greater even than this golden, gem set city for His earthly saints.

When a bridegroom seeks to show his love, he lavishes rich gifts upon his bride. These are the tokens of his esteem and the evidence of his wealth. Only thus can he display to his beloved and to his friends how genuine is his regard, and how ardent is his affection. The jeweled

city of the Apocalypse displays to all the nations of the earth how precious to Him is that holy nation which He has chosen for Himself out of all the peoples of the earth. As at the beginning, He puts His comeliness upon her and makes her His at last with the bond of unbreakable and time-defying love.

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The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 22:1-5

22 And he shows me a river of water of life, resplendent as crystal, issuing out of the throne of God and the Lambkin. ² In the center of its square, and on either side of the river is the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, rendering fruit appropriate to each month. And the leaves of the tree are for the cure of the nations. ³ And there will be no more any doom, and the throne of God and the Lambkin will be in it. And His slaves will be offering divine service to Him. ⁴ And they will be seeing His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And night will be no more, and they have no need for lamp light and sun light, seeing that the Lord God will be illuminating them. And they will be reigning for the eons of the eons.

THE SECOND THRONE SECTION

THE first Throne section revealed a throne out of which issued lightnings and voices and thunders. What a satisfaction to note the contrast in the new earth! Instead of dire portents, we gaze upon a river of water of life resplendent as crystal, issuing out of the throne of God and the Lambkin (22:1). The throne will be in the midst of life-giving trees. Its brightness will banish the night. The rule of the saints will continue to the end of the eon. This alone should show us that this is not the final state. Then the Son will no longer be associated with the Father in government. He will have so thoroughly subjected all to God that nothing but a Father's guidance will be needed for His family.

NO MORE DOOM

During the dark ages the church lost sight of God's goal altogether. Since the Reformation many students of the Scriptures thought they had found perfection in the millennium. Yet a few forged ahead, for they saw that the thousand years, with all their blessed release from the bondage of Satan, are but a beginning, a foretaste of the succeeding eon, when, with a new heaven and a new earth, perfection seems attained.

But even here a perplexing problem puzzles the student. If this is the "eternal state", if this is the acme of perfection, of what use are the medicinal virtues of the leaves of the tree of life? They are for the "cure of the nations". But if there is unfailing health, if sin is

gone, the curse removed, then this divine provision is superfluous. The single statement “there shall be no more curse” (22:3, A. V.) is responsible for the prevalent idea of eternal perfection in this post-millennial scene. It will reward us well to consider carefully just what is involved in this expression. “The curse” brings to our minds Adam’s sin and its consequences. Its removal suggests a return to the primitive perfection of the garden before sin had gained an entrance.

The word used in the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures for the curse pronounced in Eden is an altogether different one from that used concerning the paradise at the close of revelation. By translating both “curse” a false impression is created. We naturally suppose that the “curse” pronounced in the beginning of the history of the race is repealed at its close. Since this is a false clue and an incorrect conclusion, we shall study the word here used and its near relatives.

One of the most common elements used in the formation of Greek words is the combination *the*, meaning PLACE. It is used in very many words and is the root of the name of God. This is *theos*, which literally means the PLACER, or Disposer. The word we are about to study is also closely connected with God. It was the custom in ancient times to present costly offerings to the gods, which were suspended, or UP-PLACED, in their temples.

Such articles as crowns, vases of silver or gold, or other gifts were by this act separated from common and profane use and dedicated to the honor of the deity in whose temple they were placed. They were called *anathêma*, which will be recognized by all Bible students as almost the same as the rendering *anathema* in the common version (1 Cor. 16:22). It occurs but once in the Scriptures (Luke 21:5) and is used of the votive offerings (A. V., gifts) in Herod’s temple.

Such was the original meaning of the word. It was used only in a good sense of that which was devoted to

the Deity. But when the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures was made a thought claimed expression for which the later language had no word. In the Scriptures things and persons may be devoted to God in two entirely different ways, some for weal and some for woe, some for His service, some for destruction. The latter were "accursed to the Lord" (Josh. 6:17). The spoil of the city may all be devoted to Him, yet some find its way into His treasury and some suffer utter destruction. How shall this difference be indicated? It seems to have been done by spelling the usual term for devoted, *anathêma*, with a shorter vowel in the center, that is, the form to which we are accustomed—*anathema*. That which is *anathema*, then, is devoted to God, but it is dedicated to destruction. It has the sense of imprecation, a calling down of God's judgment upon that which is devoted to Him. It occurs in Acts 23:14, Rom. 9:3; 1 Cor. 12:3; 16:22; Gal. 1:8, 9; as a verb in Mark 14:71; Acts 23:12, 14, 21.

While the word used in the Unveiling is not *anathema*, it is a close relative of it, *katathema*. *Anathema* means UP-PLACE-effect: *katathema* is DOWN-PLACE-effect. It is a stronger expression for the thought which *anathema* had gradually acquired. Here we have the key to the problem. In the new earth there shall be nothing devoted to God for destruction. Evil has been segregated to such an extent that this is no longer necessary. Everything devoted to Him in that day will be *anathêma*—a votive offering. Nothing will be *anathema* or *katathema*, devoted to Him, yet sealed for destruction. Perhaps there is no better word in English to express this thought than "doom". God's glory now demands the doom of many: but in that delectable day His plans will have so far been perfected, His purpose will be so near realization that His glory demands that there shall be no more doom. This is further impressed upon us by the absence of sacrifice. During the thousand years which precede

this more perfect scene, the altars of God were glutted with the blood of innocent victims (Eze. 40:39, 45, 46). They had done nothing to deserve death; neither was there any real efficacy in their blood. Yet it was imperative that they be doomed to such a fate in order to figure the one great Sacrifice for sin. In the new Jerusalem and the new earth no such sacrificial scenes will find any place, for there will be no temple and no altar, no priest, and no penitent. The day of doom is past and God's glory demands that doom be done away.

Perhaps no doctrine in all the sacred records has caused so much opposition as the plain intimations that God dooms some to be vessels of His indignation. He hardened Pharoah's heart, that He might manifest His power. He fits men for destruction in order that He may make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy (Rom. 9:15-24). Should He continue to do this eternally, we can excuse the moral mind for revolting, for it would be the exhibition of omnipotent hate rather than the display of all-powerful love. Such of God's ways are dispensational: they are called forth by the needs of the epoch, or eon, in which they are found. They are not permanent principles of action, but applications of these principles to temporary conditions, such as obtain only in the eons preceding the last. By that time God's glory will have been sufficiently displayed and His methods of manifestation will be changed. The most radical of these departures from His previous manner of government lies in the positive blessing of all who are devoted to display His glory. None are doomed. None are hardened. None are vessels of His indignation. All, henceforth, become vessels of mercy, reconciled and received into His presence with rejoicing.

Thus we see that this statement does not suggest the entire absence of sin, the lack of all discord in the universe. Two plain intimations prove that the day of absolute perfection has not yet arrived. Indeed, three

things insist that the ultimate goal still lies ahead. The leaves of the tree of life are for the cure of the nations: government is still needed: the second death is still in operation. This book closes on a scene of supernal bliss, but not the final state; mankind is not yet at its goal.

If we seek light upon the ultimate we must go elsewhere to find it. It is outside the scope of this Unveiling. Only the apostle Paul is privileged to take us back before the eons. He alone speaks of the time before they began their course. And he, also, is the only inspired writer who takes us to the consummation. In the fifteenth of first Corinthians he distinctly dates that grand event beyond the latest scenes in this Unveiling. All government will be abolished. The saints will no longer reign as in this last eon, not even Christ Himself will sit upon a throne. The kingdom will be handed over to God the Father. The last great enemy, Death, is still operative, not abolished. It vanishes only at the consummation.

Let us reflect upon God's grand program of the eons and see if we cannot find the true place of the final eon. Up to the present, evil has been rampant and, until Christ comes and takes the helm, there will be no direct progress toward the blissful goal which the glory of God demands. Then comes Christ and sets up His millennial reign. It is perfect in its place, but far from absolute perfection. This is evident from the irruption of Gog and Magog at its close. It gives place to the new earth, in which there is a great advance. The barriers of priesthood vanish: nothing hinders a free approach to God.

The trend is toward perfection. Will it be attained? Will God stop short of a goal worthy of His great name? Will He rest satisfied with a patched creation? Does not every forward step plead that God's grand march proceed until His purpose has reached its consummation? The sacrifice of Christ is sufficient. The reign of Christ is successful. He will reconcile the universe to God when this final eon is at an end. Now God is painting in the

dark background. In the millennium and the day of God He will add the high lights of His picture. But it will not be finished until the eons have run their course.

THE LIVING LOG

. In the midst of the garden of Eden God planted a tree, called, in the Hebrew, "the tree of the living". Like all the trees of the garden which were planted for Adam's food and for his delight it grew "out of the ground", and, as there was no rain, it was watered by the river. It was the tree of trees, so it was placed in the very center of them all.

All those trees in the garden which were "good for food" were, in a sense, "trees of life". They nourished and prolonged the life which God had given to Adam. But to none of them was this name given. It was reserved for the one. We do not know whether Adam ate of this tree or not, but he had no need to eat, for, in innocence, death was not operating in him and he lived on without its aid. It did not give life or sustain life like the other trees, but, judging from the functions of its prototype in the Paradise of the new earth, its office was to *preserve* life, to counteract decay and dissolution and death. This, at any rate, would have been its effect upon Adam after he sinned. He would have been able, by means of the tree of life, to offset the effects of sin by the healing juices of this tree and continue to live, not "for ever", but until the fiery cataclysm which engulfs this earth and ushers in the new, with its living log.

There is no question here of "immortality" or deathlessness. Adam depended on food to sustain life and even in Eden he would have died if he refused the food which Elohim provided. Neither is there any hint that the tree of life would impart "immortality" or deathlessness, as an inherent quality. The thought seems simply to be that, just as Adam could sustain life as long as he had access to the food trees, so also he could preserve

that life from the continual and gradual operation of death (which we all experience) by means of the continual restorative action of the fruit obtained from the tree of life, if need be.

But there was another tree of special note with a special name. This was "the tree of knowledge of good and evil". It would seem that this tree also stood in the center of the garden, near the tree of life. It might well be named the tree of death, for Adam was warned, "you shall not eat of it; for in the day you shall eat of it you are dying to die" (Gen. 2:17). This state of existence (which we all know by sad experience) was the opposite of that provided for in the tree of life.

Adam could get along very well without either of these trees, and probably did until the temptation. The fruit of the tree of life made no appeal to him, for he was strong and well and had no need for medication such as it provided. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was forbidden—that was the main temptation that its fruit offered. It probably was poisonous—quite the opposite of the tree of life. It started the operation of destructive forces in the human organism which gradually led to decay and ultimate death. This process started on the very day on which it was eaten.

In due time the temptation came and Adam, loyal to his wife, joins her in partaking of the forbidden fruit. They not only get the knowledge of good, of which they had no conception, but the bitter experience of evil. They hide themselves. But God cannot be deceived. He judges the tempter, He sentences Eve and Adam and drives them from the garden to prevent their eating of the tree of life and living on as long as this earth remained. Then He placed cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of the living (Gen. 3:24).

God's procedure is eloquent in its presentation of the great change which came over His relations to the guilty

pair. Heretofore He could allow them free access to the garden and the forbidden tree. Now they may have none. If He had any confidence in them He could have laid His command on them not to touch the tree of life. But now man is not to be trusted. Or He might have taken away the tree of life or destroyed its vital efficacy. He might have destroyed it altogether. But no. The tree remains. It is guarded. It was made for man and man must receive its benefits.

And, indeed, is there not a thousandfold more need now for the tree of life than before Adam sinned? Then death needed no defiance, for it was not. Now that death has entered, the tree of life, of which there was no real need, becomes the one great and indispensable necessity for mankind. Therefore, we should rejoice that the tree was not uprooted or destroyed, but carefully guarded against the day when its unused vital juices will perform the functions for which they were created.

Through the long centuries of sin and suffering, disease, and death, until this once fair garden has become a vast cemetery, we hear no more of the tree of life. Not until all the graves have disgorged their dead and the earth has been purified in the fiery cataclysm and a new earth springs resplendent from His hand do we read of the tree of life again. It has been promised to the conqueror of the Ephesian ecclesia (2:7) and to those who do His commandments (22:14) but its blessing abides for the day when He makes all things new.

There is not the slightest hint that the denizens of the new earth are all "immortal". We seek in vain for that impossible speculation, immortality apart from the life of God. Christ only has immortality (1 Tim. 6:16). It is the portion of His saints when they are roused. It will not be the possession of all until the consummation, when death itself is done away.

Is death present on the new earth? No. Not because of immortality, but through the action of the "living

logs''. This expression is so incongruous that everyone objected to its use in translation. Yet it is full of precious significance. The usual word for "tree" is carefully avoided. In its stead a term expressive of death is used. It is wood, a *dead* tree, a log, a pole, a post. The life it treasures and imparts is a life after death, a resurrection life.

Not that it will convey to its enjoyers "immortality" in themselves. Rather it will stand ready to preserve their lives for the eon by virtue of its vital properties. Even its leaves will be medicine for healing the nations. Sin and sickness will be so nearly eradicated in that blissful era that a taste of its fruit or the essence of its leaves suffice to keep death outside its doors. And full provision is made by the presence of many trees instead of the single specimen in Eden.

Every month finds these living logs laden with the fruit appropriate to the season. Every month has its distinct possibilities of disease and each one is provided for by the living log. Thus death is defied and life lasts as long as the eon. Death is denied a single victim until it vanishes in ultimate oblivion at the consummation.

Happy, indeed, are those gentiles of other times, who, having no part in the celestial destiny which is the lot of all who are included in the present overflow of God's grace, yet will be blessed in the new earth with faithful Israel! (22:14). Many were proselytes in the past, and many more will be in the kingdom of the future. Their title to the new earth, the tree of life, and entrance into the holy city, new Jerusalem, will be the rinsing of their robes. Not only must their hearts be purified by the blood of Christ, but their conduct must conform. They have a minor part in attaining this happiness. It is in the nature of wages (22:12). How thankful we should be that there are no such requirements for the far higher destiny which is ours among the celestials!

The Concordant Version

CHAPTER 22:6-21

⁶And He said to me, "These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, commissions His messenger to show to His slaves what must occur swiftly. ⁷And lo! I am coming swiftly! Happy is he who is keeping the sayings of the prophecy of this scroll."

⁸And I, John, am the hearer and observer of these things. And when I hear and observe, I fall to worship in front of the feet of the messenger who is showing me these things. ⁹And he is saying to me: "See! No! I am a fellowslave of yours and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who are keeping the sayings of this scroll: worship God!" ¹⁰And he is saying to me, "You should not be sealing the sayings of the prophecy of this scroll, for the era is near. ¹¹Let him who is injuring, injure still; and let the filthy be filthy still; and let the just do righteousness still; and let the holy be hallowed still."

¹²"Lo! I am coming swiftly, and My wage is with Me, to pay each one as his work is. ¹³I am the A and the Z, the First and the Last, the Origin and the Consummation. ¹⁴Happy are those who are rinsing their robes, in order that it will be their license to the tree of life, and they may be entering the portals into the city. ¹⁵Outside are curs, and enchanters, and paramours, and murderers, and idolaters, and everyone fondling and fabricating falsehood.

¹⁶I, Jesus, send My messenger to testify these things to you in the ecclesias. I am the Root and the race of David, the resplendent Morning Star. ¹⁷And the spirit and the bride are saying, 'Come!' And let him who is hearing say 'Come!' And let him who is thirsting be coming. Let him who is wanting it take the water of life gratuitously.

¹⁸I am testifying to everyone who is hearing the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If ever anyone may be appending to them, God will be appending to him the calamities which have been written in this scroll. ¹⁹And if ever anyone should be eliminating from the words of the scroll of this prophecy, God will be eliminating his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this scroll.

²⁰He Who is testifying these things is saying: 'Yea, I am coming swiftly'."

"Amen! Be coming, Lord Jesus!"

²¹The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints! *Amen!*

COME, LORD JESUS!

THE visions of the Unveiling vanish. The new earth and the holy city are no longer before us. With John we return to Patmos. The scenes which held our amazed gaze dissolve into the dim and distant future. The first word that John hears is an assurance that he has not been dreaming. There has been no illusion. "These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, commissions His messengers to show to His slaves what must occur swiftly. And *lo!* I am coming swiftly! Happy is he who is keeping the sayings of the prophecy of this scroll" (22: 6, 7).

The Unveiling is the crowning prophecy of holy Writ, though limited to God's counsels concerning the earth. It is the most richly predictive of them all. All previous prophecies were partial and fragmentary. Few discerned the distant glories of the new creation. Only dim intimations of God's purpose for the earth were divulged, because His plans demanded that men should be measurably ignorant of the future. God waited until Israel had crucified the greatest of all her prophets. He tarried until the nation as a whole had become apostate. The apostle John was kept alive and did not write until there was nothing more left for Israel but dire doom ere the swift return of her Messiah. The present administration of God's grace is timeless. It could have ended when John wrote. It might have closed at any instant since that day. It may cease at any moment. Ignoring it, John wrote in the shadow of the imminent and swift fulfillment of the prophecy of this scroll.

The Unveiling could not be given while there was the least hope of Israel's national repentance. It was delayed until after the present economy of God's grace had been established by Paul's latest epistles. Its unfoldings might have modified Israel's course had they been made known much earlier. The Thessalonians were deluded into the idea that the period of this unveiling was already present in their day, even before John wrote. The future set before the saints ever since is imminent salvation at the presence of Christ to be followed by the destruction of those who do not love the truth (2 Thes. 2:10), as recorded in this Apocalypse.

There is a mistaken notion that the events of this unveiling were to take place *soon* after they were revealed. This is not the case. No prediction to that effect could be made. It is God's desire to keep the coming of Christ vividly and vitally before the hearts of His saints. Hence, so far as their knowledge could go, it has been imminent ever since this scroll was written. The next moment of our lives may be spent in His presence. Not death, but life, is our expectation. After we are removed out of the midst, the judgments detailed in this book will move *swiftly* to their close. Why emphasize their speed? Because they are God's strange work. He hastens through these horrors, for they are alien to His heart. Now that nearly two millenniums have passed since the giving of this prophecy, we can see, in the word *speedily*, a broad hint that the present era would be *protracted*, for it overflows with grace, which is in highest harmony with His heart.

Happiness is a relative reaction. It depends largely on contrasts. The assurance of future felicity helps much to soften the severities of our present plight. The faithful Israelite, for whom this scroll is primarily intended, finds in it the fulfillment of his dearest dreams. The saint of today contrasts his celestial splendors with these terrestrial glories and is happy in his higher honors.

He shudders at the judgment shocks, but is gladdened by their outcome. For all who study this stupendous unfolding of the earth's future, there is serene satisfaction.

If our heart has gained but a glimpse of the glories of Christ and His terrestrial kingdom as unveiled in these visions, it will be bowed in adoration. Such was the effect on John. After hearing and observing the swiftly moving scenes in the closing acts of the drama of humanity, his heart is too full for words, and he falls down to worship (22:8-10). The messenger approves of the act, but directs it to its proper Object, God. We cannot love an unknown deity. It is Christ unveiled Who brings our hearts into a realization of God's unfailing affection for His creatures, and leads them to own and adore Him as their Father. This is the fruit of His eonian purpose.

It is evident that much in this scroll had been kept from mankind until this unveiling was given to John. In effect it was sealed. The reason is that the era for its fulfillment was not at hand. God's plans and man's actions are predicated largely on human ignorance. If they knew God's secrets, men would not crucify the Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2:8). So in minor matters. God has doled out the details of His doings so that men may walk in the darkness of their own ignorance. This is only for the evil eons. The coming eons will be blessed with the full revelation now given as well as the actual presence of Christ, so that there will be little lack of knowledge. All seals will have been broken, all secrets revealed. The knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. The eras of ignorance will end.

From the time of John until the era of this prophecy things go on as heretofore. Those injuring still injure, the filthy are still filthy, the just are still righteous, and the holy are still hallowed (22:11). But when the next eon begins and the action of this unveiling commences, the injurious and the filthy will be judged. Once the kingdom has come, God's apparent neglect of

human affairs comes to an end. There is no time thereafter when this passage can be applied. John has come back to Patmos. The messenger speaks of those who are, at that time, injuring and filthy and just and holy. It is a mixture of saints and sinners unknown after His advent, which cannot be tolerated once He puts His hand to the helm of human affairs.

THE FINAL MESSAGE TO THE ECCLESIAS

As in the previous messages to the ecclesias, our Lord Himself intervenes with a personal word to His saints (1:8, 18). The exhortation to works and faithfulness, which pervades the seven letters to the ecclesias (chapters 2 and 3), is here condensed into a single sentence, "My *wage* is with Me, to *pay* each one as his *work* is" (22:12). This is the spirit of the evangel of the Circumcision. The Uncircumcision also look forward to reward for service, but this is subordinated to the rich gratuities of grace. Here our Lord returns to His servants and settles with them for their labors in connection with His kingdom.

THE THREE TITLES

This Apocalypse completes God's revelation to the earth. It records the closing scenes of the eonian times. It accomplishes the divine purpose within their limits. All three of these aspects are the work of Christ, and each supplies Him with an appropriate title. He is the first and last letters of the alphabet. The letters may well represent the substance of God's revelation, which is made known through them. He is the First and the Last in the time in which this revelation is staged. He is the Origin and Consummation in the deeper sense that all began in Him and will be headed up in Him at last.

Our Lord may be called the Alpha and the Omega in Greek, the Aleph and the Tau in Hebrew, or the A and the Z in English, or its equivalent in any other language,

without in the least altering the figure or its significance. Alphabetical languages usually have the letters arranged in a fixed order. The first is often used as a symbol of the beginning and the last for the ending. In God's revelation of Himself He has used many characters, but the first one was Christ and the last one will be Christ again. He commences and concludes in Him.

The First and the Last brings before us the time element. As the Scriptures deal with the eonian times rather than a mythical "eternity" (in which there can be neither first nor last), we find Christ active at the commencement of these times in the work of creation, and we also find Him engaged, in the last two eons, as set before us in this scroll, in work preliminary to the final reconciliation, which is beyond its scope. Christ did not have His beginning in Bethlehem or His end at Golgotha. The eons themselves were made through Him (Heb. 1:2).

As the Origin and the Consummation Christ inaugurates and accomplishes the complete purpose of God. Through Him God is pleased to start and to finish the work of the eons. All of this must be kept within the scope of this scroll. The consummation here is the blessing of Israel and the nations in the new earth. He is the Consummation in a far wider and more glorious sense at a still later time, when the death state is abolished and He abdicates the throne, and God becomes All in all.

Again we are reminded of the two classes whose destiny is brought before us in this prophecy. Let us remember that, at this time, John is not transported to the new earth, but is back at Patmos. Our Lord is speaking to the ecclesias. Hitherto the promises have been to the conquerors or "overcomers". Now He assures all who rinse their robes of a share in the tree of life and entrance into the holy city. Let us not suppose that the craven criminals enumerated will encircle the sacred city of the future (22:15). That would be a most distressing sight.

The point is that those who are lawless and abominable at the time when the saints rinse their robes, shall have no right to life or happiness in the last eon. They will be in the second death.

THE ROOT AND RACE OF DAVID

The name of David is the key to earthly sovereignty. He was God's anointed king. With him was the covenant of the kingdom made. It is as the Son of David that Messiah claims the throne of Israel. The fullest fulfillment of the Davidic promises is found in the final vision of the Unveiling. Place and power come to Israel through the throne of David. Hence our Lord relates Himself to the shepherd king in His final message to the ecclesias. As all was created in Him and is carried on through Him, He is not only David's descendant, but also the One from Whom he sprang. By creation He is David's Root. By generation He is of David's race. Both are a pledge to His people of His right to the throne and His ability to fill it to God's glory and their good.

THE MORNING STAR

Now it is night. The darkness is deepening toward the dawn. Just before He comes as the sun to shed His beneficent rays upon the millennial earth, His refulgence will be seen as the Morning Star, herald of the approaching day. As the weary watcher anxiously scans the eastern sky to catch the first gleam of the torch-like harbinger of the morning, so will Israel's weary saints watch for the coming of their Christ, in the darkest hour of their history. No wonder the spirit and the bride say "*Come!*" All should say "*Come!*" Mankind's universal thirst will never be slaked on earth until He comes. The fever of human futility is growing worse. There is no satisfying draught. He alone can supply the living water for the parched lips of mankind when He returns. O, that He would come!

THE FINAL WARNING

The transmission of God's revelation is a standing miracle. This is especially true of this concluding scroll, which crowns God's eonian, terrestrial purpose. It has been misunderstood, ridiculed, and opposed from the beginning. It was barely kept in the canon. One of the marks of its authenticity and inspiration is the warning with which it concludes (22:18, 19). The Author was well aware that it would be an enigma to almost all who would read it. He foresaw the tendency to add the dreams and hallucinations of men. He knew the intense enmity it would engender in the forces of evil. The warning is prophetic of the fortunes of this Apocalypse.

If there were no other passage to prove it than this warning, it would suffice to show that this scroll is entirely outside the scope of the present grace. In this economy, where sin abounds, grace superexceeds. We are not deterred from evil by threats as to our destiny. Our acts affect only our rewards. This warning applies exclusively to the kingdom economy. Nevertheless, the text of this scroll has been sufficiently safeguarded, so that all of its vital values have been retained, though its various manuscripts have come down to us with more variants and omissions than that of any other book. A glance at the Greek pages of the Concordant Version will show that the superlinear is more crowded in the Unveiling than anywhere else in that volume.

THE RESPONSE OF THE SAINTS

The sacred scrolls begin with God and close with the coming of Christ. After sin entered, Adam hid himself from the face of Jchovah. He wished to escape from His presence. That is characteristic of all sinners. The change wrought in mankind by the course of the eons may be summed up in the closing response of the saints: "*Amen! Be coming, Lord Jesus!*" (22:20). The dread of the Deity, and a desire to hide at a distance from

Him has been replaced by a longing for our Lord, in Whom God is revealed. This is the fruition of God's purpose, the goal of all His activities, the satisfaction which He seeks. He wants all to seek Him, to desire Him, to long for Him. His delight is in those who love our Lord's appearing.

Let us not close the Bible until we have derived deep satisfaction from the words which end it, except for the concluding salutation. They are arresting. Note that they are not the words of God, or of Christ. They are the words of the saints. They are the expression of inspired human hearts. Everyone who can utter these words from the depths of his being can claim a precious part in the penning of this inspired prophecy. "*Amen! Be coming, Lord Jesus!*" Even we, who look for Him before He comes to the Circumcision saints (to whom these words immediately apply), cannot restrain our spirits from joining this response. Indeed, we shall know the joy of their fulfillment while many of them are still sighing for His return.

I confess that I cannot conceive of a true believer in Christ who does not long to be with and like his Lord. Whatever we may be taught, our immanent love for the Saviour instinctively longs for His presence. It is only those who dislike us who shun us. Those who love us want us and we want them. I take it that a sincere yearning for Christ and His return is a surer proof that we are His than the confession of any creed, however correct it may claim to be. I feel sure that nothing so delights our God as heart hunger for Himself, as expressed in a craving for the coming of His Christ. I feel that He could not close His revelation with greater gratification to His love than He does when He hands the pen to His saints, and they finish the book for Him with the cry that discloses His conquest of their hearts: "*Amen! Be coming, Lord Jesus!*"

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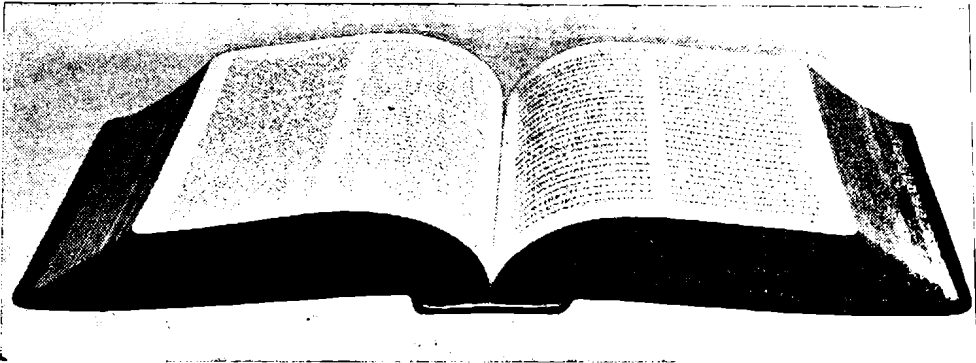
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